

GEORGE MARION

All  
Quiet  
in the  
Kremlin

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## *About Russian Names*





## Preface to Second Edition

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MR. JOSEPH HENRY JACKSON was all business and no belles-lettres. And I was glad of that. For I had not dropped in on the book-editor of the San Francisco *Chronicle* to discuss art, literature or the state of the American novel. I had called on the off-chance that I might get Mr. Jackson to print a review of my book, *All Quiet in the Kremlin*. So I came right to the point.

"I could have sent you a copy of this book and let it go at that, Mr. Jackson. It is, I hope, an objective and unpretentious description of Soviet life as any non-expert American visitor might see it today. With Russia so much in the spotlight, the book might be expected to attract a reviewer's attention. But experience has taught me better, and so I wanted to talk to you. As newspaperman to newspaperman, I would like to ask you something about the practical problems of review. When my first book, *Bases & Empire*, appeared, I sent out a considerable number of review-copies and took other steps to get normal notice. It turned out to be a waste of time and money. So I have done very little about the present book. But I am here in San Francisco on a brief lecture tour and I thought it would be wrong to leave without making some effort to bring my book to the attention of the most influential book-reviewer on the West Coast.

"Now let me ask you a blunt question: In the present political climate of the United States, are you in a position to review a book of this unorthodox kind? Or are you under such pressures, whether from your publisher or from other sources, that you would find it inexpedient to review a book on Russia that doesn't conform to the currently popular pattern?"

Mr. Jackson was indignant at the suggestion. In his twenty-odd years

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in the business he had never once been subjected to any pressure and the day that occurred would be the day he would walk out and so on.

"But," and the real reply always begins at the first but, "but there is another consideration. I think the function of the newspaper's book-section is to give people more information about the books they *want* to know more about. If it is a book they have already heard about, they will want to know whether to buy it or skip it. If it is a new book by an author they know, they are always anxious to know what's in his new book."

I asked mildly if he would consider reading my book to see if it weren't worth review, but Mr. Jackson rejected the suggestion unqualifiedly. His job was to review books published by established houses and duly brought to the attention of potential readers by adequate outlay for advertising and other promotion. He couldn't possibly "use" any other kind of book in his syndicated column. This point of view wasn't new to me but I had never before heard it put so baldly, nakedly.

"Aside from books I write or edit, and the work of running this department including its Sunday book-section, I have a daily column to do. I have to schedule my time pretty carefully to get the necessary reading done. So I couldn't afford to read a book I couldn't use in my column."

Without prodding from me, he went on to spell out his meaning. "I pick up a book like this, for instance, and I see it is published by Fairplay Publishers. Now I can't touch that. I don't know who Fairplay Publishers is. . . ."

"Fairplay Publishers is just me," I interjected.

"Yes. Now suppose I were to review this book or run a review. A man in Sacramento, let's say, gets interested and goes into Levinson's and asks for the book. They've never heard of Fairplay Publishers so what do they do?"

"They can order it from any major wholesale book distributor in the United States—American News, Baker & Taylor, McClurg in Chicago," I explained.

"Well, Levinson's is a pretty big shop and he might know how to order your book," Jackson resumed. "But even in a big shop, the clerks

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aren't well trained and they probably wouldn't know. So they tell the man: 'Fairplay Publishers? Never heard of them!' And the man goes out irritated and maybe writes a note to the *Chronicle*. Three or four such notes and the publisher will ask: 'What's this fellow Jackson up to, reviewing books nobody ever heard of?'"

NOW I might have thought that this constituted a form of pressure exerted by the publisher on his book-editor, if Mr. Jackson hadn't assured me that he was under no pressure and would never, never submit to pressure. It is quite possible that Mr. Jackson doesn't feel the pressure because he is already voluntarily headed in the direction his publisher wants him to go. Where there is no resistance there is no rape. But however Mr. Jackson feels about it, it seems to me that the American people are subjected to some peculiar pressure somewhere in the process.

Let's see how the whole system operates. A few major book-publishing firms dominate the market. They own or control or are integrated with the big book-clubs and the bulk of the marketing machinery. The lesser publishers operate in their shadow, dine on their leavings. In the field of world affairs, this handful of publishers issues books that all sing more or less the same tune about Russia and, by an odd coincidence, it is much the same tune the daily newspapers and radio and State Department and Voice of America sing. The average citizen *has* to believe what all these books and papers say because, as far as he knows, not a single informed person in the world denies what they say.

But there are dissenters! I dissent. I have come back from the Soviet Union with a quite different story than the one the papers tell us fifty million times a day. The book publishers don't like my story, so they don't publish it. Very well, I get it published in spite of them. But then my book lacks the imprint of an "approved" house, so Mr. Jackson and his fellow-reviewers can't be bothered with reviewing it, and John Citizen still doesn't know there is another point of view than the uniform one of the daily papers and "respectable" book publishers. To whatever extent John Citizen participates in making decisions as to American foreign policy (with all its domestic consequences) he

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decides on the basis of carefully screened information, a deliberately one-sided presentation of the facts of life.

This is what is known in our country as "freedom of the press." For my money it is the cleverest and most complete censorship the world has ever known! I tried to present that idea to Mr. Jackson for his comment, but I was able to ask him less than half a question.

"Don't you think," I began, "that by ruling out all the books that lack the imprint of a big publisher, you raise the question of freedom of the press?"

I was not through, but Mr. Jackson interrupted to dismiss my objection. "There's no such issue," he stated categorically. "You have no idea how many self-published books come in here. We simply haven't time for them. One book may be an experimental play, another a book of verse. The author of each considers his work just as important as, no doubt, you think your book is. And for all I know all three of you are right. But I haven't time to read the play and I haven't time to read the book of verse and I haven't time to read your book. That's all there is to it. Where's the issue of freedom of the press in that?"

"I'll answer that with a question," I replied. "Did you ever hear of the *New York Times* refusing to take an ad for an experimental play or a book of verse? I never did. But the *New York Times* has always refused ads for my books! Doesn't that suggest there is something more to the matter than the question of a publisher's imprint? Isn't it the *content* of my books that draws the fire and ire of the *Times*?"

MR. JACKSON opened his eyes pretty wide for a moment. Evidently this particular form of censorship had not come to his attention before. He asked if the *Times* had given me any reason for refusing to take ads. I replied that though I had written to publisher Arthur Hayes Sulzberger and Managing Editor Edwin James and had received written rejection from business manager Harold Hall, I had never been given a reason.

"Why then," said Mr. Jackson, "perhaps they simply didn't think it was a book!"

"Good!" I returned. "I like cards on the table. And that's a point I

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think we must consider. Since I became a reluctant publisher I have been offered lots of manuscripts and I am perfectly aware that most of them don't add up to a book. What's more, let's be brutal about it: there are plenty of pure crackpots in this field. So I am quite ready to take this position with you: When an author presents a self-published book, or when an unknown publisher produces a book, the burden of proof (as the lawyers say) is on the author-publisher. It is up to him to prove that he really has a book. Until he does so, you can't blame reviewers who pass the book by.

"But now let's consider the case of an author who faces all those barriers, with a book that surmounts them. When a book has come out under the handicap of self-publication, received no reviews in the papers or magazines, been denied access to important sections of the book-market even by way of paid advertising, and in spite of that achieves very respectable notice, what then? My book, *Bases & Empire*, for instance, was ultimately reviewed in the *Annals* of the American Academy of Political and Social Science; the review said this is a book you can't laugh off, this is a book that contains 'cogent information not otherwise available to the American reader.' Now, doesn't the case change? I think it does. I think that now, to repeat that same lawyer's phrase, the burden of proof shifts. It falls on the reviewer who didn't review and the man who refused to take an ad. Let them prove their good faith. Let them explain why they concealed the very existence of this book from the reading public. Let them tell us how policy decisions can be democratic<sup>1</sup> arrived at while they deliberately prevent the people from hearing anything but the officially approved point of view. And let them explain why they ignore my present book just as they did the previous ones."

A soft answer turneth away wrath. "I can see that you are a good debater," said Mr. Jackson. But I had not come for personal compliments and still less to debate with Mr. Jackson. Debate could not be profitable I knew, because I had been over this ground before. I had learned that our distinguished intellectuals are usually whitewashers of our controlled-press and I know their stock answers. There was my meeting with Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt a few years ago, for instance, on exactly this issue.

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THE circumstances were these: I had written a pamphlet called "The 'Free Press': Portrait of a Monopoly," and someone quoted the pamphlet during one of the United Nations debates at Lake Success. Mrs. Roosevelt, a member of the United States delegation to the U.N., rose to reply. Why, the very fact that this pamphlet was published, she said, proves that there is real freedom of the press in the United States. I caught up with her a day or two later in one of the committee rooms and asked her a question. Did she think there was freedom of the press just because no law prevented me from writing such a pamphlet? What if after I had written it, I found that all the presses and distribution-machinery were controlled by a handful of publishers who were controlled by a handful of bankers and that between them they would not let my pamphlet circulate or would not, in effect, let it be printed? Would that be freedom of the press?

"Hah," snorted Mrs. Roosevelt, "they don't have to print it."

They certainly don't have to print it! And they certainly don't print it! And they certainly take positive steps to restrict my freedom to circulate it after I print it myself. Is it "freedom of debate" when you say your piece over a national network while I talk to myself in a telephone booth? If you want to call that freedom of the press, freedom of information, freedom of thought, freedom of debate, that's your privilege. But it is bunk all the same.

I am not complaining that any wrong has been done me, mind you. I'm quite willing to go on fighting for a forum. But a wrong is done the American people who are not allowed to hear me. For I am not talking for myself alone. I am reporting what hundreds of millions of people outside the United States are saying. When I am silenced, a wrong is done the American people who are harried into accepting wage-freezes, high prices, high taxes, peace-time militarization, wholly unnecessary wars in distant lands—all on the strength of certain assumptions about the Soviet Union, assumptions that don't square with evidence visible to the naked eye of any American who chances to visit Russia, assumptions I am prepared to challenge.

This business of taking a *formal* freedom, a *legal* right, and presenting it as an actual freedom is a debater's trick. The shadow is offered for the substance; it is a kind of *hoc est corpus* ceremony (which not

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for nothing has given rise to the expression *hocus pocus*). But it is no mere debater's trick; it is not just a play on words but the essence of the most dangerous political game ever played anywhere on earth. And it is in these United States today that it is being played.

I have just been reading some opinions delivered by the august Justices of the Supreme Court of the United States. They dealt with the cases of various organizations and individuals who had been put on the United States Attorney General's "subversive" blacklist. Now hardly a day goes by that you don't read of some serious damage done to one of these blacklisted persons or organizations as a result of the blacklisting. Physical violence has been done to individuals; property has been destroyed, men have been driven not only from their jobs but from their trades and professions and not a few suicides have resulted. Yet several of the learned judges, including the Chief Justice, declared that this strange new power of blacklist in no way curbs the freedom of the blacklisted men.

"They are in the position of every proponent of unpopular views," said these judges. "Heresy induces strong expressions of opposition." (Ah, you see, it is their non-conformist views that causes them to be attacked by mobs; it is not the public blacklisting-process that whips up the mobs!) "So long as petitioners are permitted to voice their political ideas," they continued, "it is hard to understand how any advocate of freedom of expression can assert their right has been unconstitutionally abridged."

They may cut off our hands at the wrists, but glory be, we shall still have the legal right to pound a typewriter. They may undermine our trade-unions with informers, deliver them over to the leadership of "loyal" Americans chosen by the employers, frame and imprison union men who are so old-fashioned as to fight for higher wages and better conditions; but the right to organize will still be there on the books. They may arrest—they have arrested—distinguished Americans who dared to advocate peace, on a charge of failing to register as foreign agents; but so long as these Americans were not denied the right to speak their minds the Constitution is unimpaired. You can't call a little thing like being put in jail an "impairment of freedom," can you?

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THE Nazis did things more crudely. But for all that, it seems to me that we have gone a long way, a long, long way down the same road Germany traveled under Hitler. And because I believe that, and because I see that we are being led down that road under the pretext of a war threat from Russia, I never permitted my little talk with Joseph Henry Jackson to become an aimless bull-session. So I turned the talk back to the question of a review.

"I can understand your position," I said. "I myself have to do a lot of jobs to carry on my work and I know they can't be done according to some ivory-tower blueprint but must take into account the actual circumstances at the time and place each job has to be done. So I am ready to agree that ninety-seven per cent of your book-section must be devoted to well-advertised books, must deal with books as merchandise, as commodities going to market. But doesn't there remain a little corner of the book-page, say three per cent, in which you can review books not with regard to their attractions in the market-place but solely for their content? If there is a little place like that, wouldn't the *theme* of my book entitle it to consideration?"

We parted in a friendly manner. Mr. Jackson promised to consider the matter but pledged nothing. And I expect nothing. I do not, and we must not, look to the Big Business press or to Big Business itself for aid in a battle which is, essentially, against Big Business. No, we must rely upon our own resources. And if I have told you this little story of an encounter with one small representative of the great commercial press, it was not for the purpose of amusing you. Neither did I write *All Quiet in the Kremlin* to that end. The story and the book are intended to be part of the battle. When you have read the book, if you feel I have told the truth, I hope you will want to tell others about it. Your review can be more important than Mr. Jackson's.

GEORGE MARION



# ALL QUIET IN THE KREMLIN



## PART I: STALINGRAD STORIES

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### CHAPTER I

## So I Asked Mr. Vishinsky

I DIDN'T meet a single Russian with horns, hooves and a tail. Not a one. So nothing I can say will satisfy those who make the rain and the fair weather in our country today. That can't be helped. I can talk only about what I saw, and I saw nothing that in any way resembled the Soviet world imagined by our daily newspapers, radios, public speakers and Hollywood features. All I saw was a strangely tenacious people doing a simply staggering job of a kind and in a way quite inconceivable in our country. I must apologize for that: I fully realize that so simple a discovery is bound to make very tame reading alongside the currently fashionable tales about iron curtains, secret police, labor camps and heaven knows what other hellish inventions. Yet simple as it is, it took me quite a while to make this discovery and to comprehend that "the job" explains everything you see, hear or read in the Soviet Union. Let me repeat and reword it: The Russians are doing an enormous job. Convinced that they can finish it and determined that nothing in the world shall stop them, they work with an intensity and devotion not to be matched in our country. If you keep your eye on the job, nothing in the Soviet Union will prove mysterious. What that job is, what the Russians think they are building, I tried to understand and I shall try to tell you. That, in fact, is the purpose of this book. When we get into that, there will be plenty of room for disagreement. But there can be no

dispute about the fact that the Russians are absorbed in building, preoccupied with it, reluctant to glance aside. No one can be long in the Soviet Union without learning that every Russian mind, muscle and minute belong to the job. And of course when I say "Russian" I mean all the inhabitants of the Soviet Union from the grape-growing Armenians to the fur-trapping Yakuts.

But the place to begin is the beginning. The recipe for hare-pie starts: "First catch your hare." The man who would write a book about what he saw in Russia, must first have a visa. And, if I may say so, a passport to stamp the visa on. In the present state of the world, you do not obtain either as a mere matter of course. In fact, the way things are, people's eyes open wide when they hear that an American has just been to the Soviet Union, or is on his way. My fellow-passengers on the Polish steamship *Batory* (that took me on the first leg of my journey to Russia) were, figuratively, pop-eyed about it. Not that I noticed their eyes. But an anti-Tito Yugoslav who had been picked up and detained for a long time on Ellis Island at the instance of the Yugoslav authorities and was "voluntarily" leaving America, (with the alternative of forcible deportation to Yugoslavia), told me about it.

"Some people," he said, one day late in the voyage, "can't figure out how you expect to get into Russia now. Of course I told them it was none of their business—"

"Oh, there's nothing secret or even private about it," I encouraged him, thinking he was the "some people." "I have a visa so I don't anticipate any trouble getting in."

"Yes, but," he returned "that's just what they don't understand. The Poles talk about it among themselves a great deal."

"What Poles?" I asked, wondering if he meant the ship's officers and crew.

"The Poles who are going home," he explained. Many of our passengers were Polish repatriates we had picked up in New York and Halifax. "They wonder how you, an American, could get a visa to enter the Soviet Union."

"Easiest question I ever answered," I assured him. "Just tell them I asked Mr. Vishinsky!"

"Oh," said my Yugoslav friend.

And I am sure that the Poles also said, "Oh." Which, translated from the Polish means: "Quite a wise guy, aren't you?"

Nevertheless, that's substantially how I got my visa. It's easy enough to see why, when you know how it started. For all practical purposes, my trip began when someone called my attention to the December 2, 1948 issue of *Pravda*, the most important newspaper in the Soviet Union. That issue contained a very long review of a book I had written, *Bases and Empire: A Chart of American Expansion*, which was first published in New York early that year. I could painfully transliterate the Russian alphabet, though at that time I could not read a dozen words of Russian (that's about how many I can read now), so I examined a footnote at the bottom of the review. I took it that the note, in fine type, contained the name of the book under review, its publisher, and so on. Spelling out the Russian letters, I saw that the title was easily recognizable as a Russification of the words *Bases and Empire*. But the name of the publisher was a long, intricate one that could not be a transliteration of the New York publisher's name. I sat up and took notice. This then, was the name of a Russian publisher and that meant there was a Russian-language edition of the book!

That is the usual way one finds out—if one ever finds out—that his book has been translated into Russian. I do not know why it is so, but it is. I had heard, however, that the same Russian publishing house that so unceremoniously appropriates your book and neglects even to tell you about it, is apt to be very scrupulous about setting aside royalties for you. In rubles. In rubles that can be used only in the Soviet Union.

I guess you can guess my next thought. Who has not wanted to go to the Soviet Union? Who but the most confirmed stay-at-home would not like to see for himself what is happening in Russia? Of course you and I, who do not speak the Russian language and are not deeply studied in any aspect of Soviet

life, might have a moment of hesitation. We might doubt that we were equipped to observe important things going on in Russia. Particularly if our object were to report to our fellow-Americans. We would know that such a report must get at essentials, must have an internal unity, must be interesting, and we would have to decide whether we were qualified for the job.

Yet a little reflection will show that we are not only well fitted for this job but are the only people who can do it. A man who knows Russian and has spent his whole life in the field of Russian studies, will undoubtedly see things we can't. He won't make elementary mistakes that we are bound to make. What he sees and hears he will interpret with more depth than we can give our observations. But that misses the point! For you and I want to go to Russia precisely because we wonder what we—not the specialist—can find there. You and I, average, unspecialized Americans, are deeply concerned about the constant war talk arising from the deterioration of relations between the world's two decisive powers. We have heard what the specialists have to say—mostly anti-Soviet specialists, unfortunately; men who put their knowledge of the Russian language and Soviet society at the service of other men who are already irrevocably committed to hostility toward Russia. They talk on the radio, they write or are interviewed by the newspapers, they publish books. We know them. But the question of war or peace is too serious a question to be decided by specialists. Our whole lives, our children's lifetimes, will be determined by the answer that is given. So we are unwilling to have anyone else answer for us. We can't speak Russian, true; but we can speak English and we are going to say "Yes" or "No" for ourselves.

We have approached the question of qualifications with a certain humility. And there are risks in that. Our world is not too used to humility. If you admit there are things you don't know, it has a tendency to go all the way with you and keep going; it may say you don't know anything. We can't avoid that risk but if we define more exactly what we want in Russia,

it may appear that we are not over our depth. We have been told, day and night for five years, that the Russians are to blame for the state of permanent siege in which we seem to be living. We want to know if that's so. Are the Russian people engaged in activities that make it impossible for us to live in peace with them? Are they being taught things that threaten our peace and our "way of life"? If they are engaged in such activities, if they are being taught such things, no concealment is possible. You can't hide a whole people and its way of life. Therefore, you or I or any average honest and bewildered American, could go to the Soviet Union with every expectation of finding out what we really want to know, what it's vital that we know. There is no reason we can't be as objective as the most trained observer: our purpose is objective. We aren't going there as Soviet apologists but neither are we going as critics. We are not interested in proving that this or that thing the Russians do is right nor are we dedicated to proving that it's wrong. We just want to understand *why* they do it. If we know why, we'll know whether or not it injures the chances for peace and that's the only right and wrong we recognize.

So much for what we have in common. Now a personal note: only a fraction of a second separated my discovery that there was a Russian edition of my book, from the decision to try to go to Russia. I had long ago rejected the contention that Soviet activities *abroad* made a peaceful settlement impossible. In fact, my earlier-cited book was on that theme. It offered evidence from the most conservative American sources that American, not Russian interests, were responsible for the cold war and desired a hot one. The book sought to show that there was every reason for returning to the Roosevelt policy as outlined at Yalta and Teheran, thereby giving the world a stable peace. You can easily imagine, therefore, how eager I was to go to Russia and see if there was anything *inside* the Soviet Union that was threatening or encouraging to those who would make peace.

It was not, however, until the following spring that I got around to applying for a passport and visa. I was then engaged

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in writing a book about the Communist trial in New York, and didn't know when I would be in a position to go, but I took for granted that a visa would be months in coming, at best, so there was no harm in an early start. My application was in the form of a letter stating that I would like to gather material for a book in Russia and that I could pay my own way there after which I hoped to find royalty-rubles to cover my expenses in the Soviet Union. Of course no visa came that month. Or the next. Or the next. And I was too busy to do anything about it, if there were anything to be done. By mid-October, however, my new book was at the printer's, and I thought it was time to come to a decision.

What was there to do? I had had a secret idea about that from the very beginning. Getting in line and waiting your turn is all very well; going "through channels," as the expression goes, is a proper way to do things and indeed commendable. But all too often your reward is in heaven. If there's something you need while you're still on this earth, my experience has been that it's all right to fill out Form No. 1755 in quadruplicate—provided you also get someone to introduce you to the chairman of the board. I wanted a chance to tell some Russian who mattered, just what I wanted. In 1947, when I covered the sessions of the United Nations General Assembly, I had had an opportunity to attend a party at the Soviet Consulate in New York. Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Y. Vishinsky, then personally conducting the fight for his "warmonger" resolution, had been on the reception line at the consulate, formally greeting each arriving guest. If I could get to another affair of that kind, I would take advantage of any opportunity to put my case to the head man.

The big Soviet holiday is November 7, anniversary of the Soviet Revolution. But it was November 5 before I found a moment to ask a friend how I could get an invitation to the affair at the Soviet Consulate this year. I couldn't, he replied. I couldn't because there wouldn't be any and there wouldn't be any because there wasn't any consulate! I had completely



forgotten the consulate had been closed as a sequel to the much headlined affair of Madame Kasenkina, who jumped out of a window of the consulate!

There would be just the kind of thing I needed, however, in the Soviet Embassy in Washington. I'm sure I could have obtained an invitation if I had had time, but I didn't. So I borrowed someone else's invitation and went to the party incognito. Or, to put it less politely, I crashed the gate. Well, that was certainly not the same as having someone introduce you to the chairman of the board.

Still, it made no difference. I followed my plan; I took up my post in the second-floor foyer where Ambassador and Mrs. Panyushkin, looking bored and tired, and Foreign Minister Vishinsky, pink and alert, were doing duty on the reception line. At the first break in the flow of arrivals, I walked up to Mr. Vishinsky and spoke to him through his interpreter, Oleg Troyanovsky, son of former Ambassador Alexander Troyanovsky. First excusing myself for presenting my business at a time of deadly torment—if there is anything deadlier than having to formally receive two thousand people at a diplomatic affair, I haven't met it—I gave my name and started to identify myself further by saying I had a book that had appeared in Russia, so that I could later explain that I counted on the rubles to carry me through my project. But I had said only five words: "I have a book called . . ." when he interjected: "I know your book." I therefore skipped the preliminaries and stated my business. We were interrupted by new arrivals occasionally, but between times he listened, asked questions, and promised to look into the matter. I thanked him and extended my hand to go. He took my hand and held me back a moment to volunteer a compliment on my book—this time in careful English.

With this encouragement I went away satisfied that I had done the right thing even though I still didn't believe anything would come of it. How could a man on the rack of the reception line really remember anything anyone said to him in the

hour of his agony? I will never know whether he did anything about it or not. All I know is that four days later I got a letter from the Soviet Embassy saying there was a visa there anytime I wanted it! It might have been sheer coincidence, but I have my own opinion about it. I think it didn't hurt to see the chairman of the board.

## CHAPTER II

# The Reluctant Russians

OUR STORY begins in Stalingrad. Not that my trip began there, but that the rest can wait. Our story begins in Stalingrad because Stalingrad gave us our story. But don't think it gave it to us easily. There is a myth in America that tells of a kind of "guided tour" the Russians give their visitors. And all these visitors are supposed to be naive people who see just what they're shown and listen to just what they're told and don't see the real Russia at all and don't hear the dark and secret stuff behind the curtain. The first thing the adult visitor to the Soviet Union learns is that this is a lot of bunk. The idea that you are carefully chaperoned, indeed followed by police, is just about the opposite of the truth. John Steinbeck, the American novelist who visited the Soviet Union in 1947 with photographer Robert Capa, makes the point that the real problem is to get the Russians to take you on a tour! The moment his plane landed at the Moscow airport, he notes, "a great loneliness fell on us. There wasn't one person there to meet us. There wasn't a familiar face. We couldn't ask a question. We didn't have any Russian money. We didn't know where to go." Safely installed in a hotel later, "we didn't know yet what our status was. In fact, we weren't quite sure how we had got there, who had invited us." Nor did this situation quickly change. "Far from being watched and shadowed and followed," Steinbeck says, "we could hardly get anyone to admit that we

were there at all." Where is that great Soviet propaganda organization of our myth? Steinbeck says flatly: "It is our belief that the Russians are the worst propagandists, the worst public relations people, in the world."

My own experiences were very like those of Steinbeck but I would put it this way: the Russians have literally *no* public relations policy! I could find no evidence that there existed an organization charged with the conduct of public relations in the sense we use the term. And that made my work harder, especially in Moscow. If I accomplished more in Stalingrad than I did in Moscow, or at least if I was better satisfied with my working conditions, it was because I met a man in Stalingrad who *did* have a sense of public relations.

Michael Lobachov, secretary of the Stalingrad section of the Soviet Writers Union, loved his adopted city and wanted people everywhere to know how wonderful it was. As a writer and journalist, he knew how hard it is to get the facts, the human interest you need, and he did everything he could to help me. He went along with me day and night for more than two weeks. He told people I was a good fellow. Help him, he said. Don't give him propaganda speeches, give him what he wants. Call that a guided tour if you want to, but it's the kind of public relations policy that made me feel I had obtained the freedom of the city!

• So people were ready to help me and asked me what I wanted and I told them I wanted their own stories. Maybe you think it was easy after that? Then you've never tried to get a story out of a man. Every reporter knows how hard it is to get people to understand what constitutes a story, their story. You might think Stalingrad—with such a story!—would be an exception, but it isn't. Let me tell you just one little story about one little story I tried to get in Stalingrad.

About a year ago, the Stalingrad Tractor Factory established an orphanage—though the Russians never use that word; they call it a "children's home." The seventy-eight children in it are all victims of the Battle of Stalingrad; every one of them had experienced the horrors of the shelling and bombing that

left the city a mass of brick-dust and twisted steel. In touring the battlefields, I had learned that many families lived in trenches throughout the battle, so that when I got to the new "children's home," I expected to obtain, without much effort, all the useful material I cared to collect. I was all the more encouraged when I met the director of the home, Marie Simyonova, and found out that she had been in children's work before the battle, during the battle and ever since. Surely she would be a treasure-house of Stalingrad stories!

Yet somehow Simyonova seemed unable to tell me anything more than I already knew: that many Stalingrad children, many of the children in the home, had seen their mothers killed by shells and bombs at their very side. She could not tell a consecutive, detailed story about *one* child. Lobachov did his best to explain to her the kind of details that he, as a writer who has, indeed, written a great deal about Stalingrad, would find useful. But nothing came of it. With us there was also an important and popular executive of the tractor factory, Stepanov, himself one of the heroes of the Battle of Stalingrad, and he too tried to draw from Simyonova the story we wanted. But it was no use. She was certainly trying, but she honestly didn't know any one rounded story; she knew only the general picture.

"Well, I'll tell you a story," the tractor-man volunteered when we appeared to have reached an impasse. "I remember a skilled worker at the factory, Goncharev, who went to the front at the start of the war, and was killed there. During the Battle of Stalingrad, his widow and their two children, a three-year-old girl, Raya, and a five-year-old boy, Tolya, lived in the trenches most of the time. Like everyone else," he remarked parenthetically. "They stayed in the trenches through the first bombings that continued without one minute's interruption for four days and nights, and when that was over there wasn't a house left standing so of course they went on living in the trenches. Like everyone else. One early evening, the little girl asked her mother for a drink and, being a mother, Mrs. Goncharev left her shelter and crawled out into that awful battle-

field to look for water. The kids waited, they began to cry, they waited some more, but she didn't come back. And now it was pitch dark. These were Stalingrad children who were not frightened by the blast of battle, but they were children all the same, and being alone in the dark was too terrifying for them. So they set out to find their mother. The boy tried to carry the little girl and couldn't make it; every few feet he would fall. The bombing was continuous, but they didn't pay any attention to that because bombing had become a normal part of the life of Stalingrad children. They kept going until somehow they stumbled across their mother—dead of head wounds."

Stalingrad children understood such things. At five, at three, they understood death. They knew they were forever without a mother. They cried there awhile, then went to look for heaven knows what children of that age might think they were looking for. Again Tolya tried to carry Raya, and again he found he couldn't make it. He put her down, telling her to wait and he'd come back for her. A moment later, he was caught up in a crowd of civilians being herded to a concentration camp just out of town by the Germans. He cried frantically, "My little sister is all alone back there," but you can imagine how much attention the Germans paid to that. He spent the night—and who knows how many nights?—in the rain and mud behind a barbed-wire fence. Children's time-words don't mean much. If you asked Tolya what happened next he would say "*zaftra*" (tomorrow) thus and so happened, but that doesn't mean it really happened the next day in our sense, but only "later" or "subsequently." Anyhow, *zaftra* a man ran away from the camp and took Tolya with him. Evidently, that had to do with a mass flight from the camp at a moment when things were going badly for the Germans. At any rate, Tolya turned up, when the Germans were smashed, at an assembly point from which children of Stalingrad were taken to an orphanage in the town of Dubovka twenty-five miles away, an orphanage Simyonova had established.

Tolya adjusted to life in the orphanage (as why shouldn't a

boy who could adjust to life in the trenches, to life alone and motherless on the battlefields of Stalingrad, to life in a German concentration camp at Stalingrad?) Several months later, drawing busily, he heard a girl's voice in a neighboring room—and dropped his drawing. He got up and went to investigate.

"What's your name?" he asked the girl.

"Rayechka," she answered.

"Did you have a brother?"

"Yes."

"What's his name?"

"Tolya."

And that was that.

Here is what had happened to Raya. She sat alone, in the dark, crying for her mother and brother. Many men were passing and she called after them, in the fashion of Russian children, "Uncle, uncle," but they must have been German soldiers for they paid no attention. Eventually a man on a horse came along. He stopped and gave her a piece of sugar. Other people figure in her unclear story, and it is supposed the horseman took her to some family which cared for her awhile and got her to the orphanage some months before Tolya discovered her.

Tolya is now in the fourth grade at Dubovka, the tractor-man concluded, and Raya in the second. He never leaves her but takes care of her as if he were her father and mother rather than a brother.

Simyonova listened as intently as I to Stepanov's story of Tolya and Raya Goncharev. And then, in all innocence, this woman who had just told us she didn't know any particular histories typical of Stalingrad, and who indeed believed that she knew none, sighed and did not see us but looked back into the past and with clouded forehead murmured more to herself than to us: "Yes, it was just so with Valery and Malvina." And who are Valery and Malvina? Only Simyonova's adopted children, that's all! Until Stepanov's story jogged her memory, she had so thoroughly forgotten the details of those dark days that she did not remember the misadventures of her own children!

It is not necessary to add their story to that of the Goncharev

children. One curious detail will do: Valery cannot eat calve's-foot jelly to this day. Why? Because he lived many terrible months "under the Germans," eating unpleasant things. Valery and his fellow-wanderers more often than not, had no food but the boiled skins of dead horses, an odious dish that apparently bears much resemblance to calve's-foot jelly.

All right, this is a very minor story; there are tens of thousands like it in Stalingrad. But little or big, I never would have got it without the sponsorship of Lobachov—and an assist from Stepanov. If that's propaganda, it's the strangest kind of propaganda and the strangest breed of propagandist I ever heard of: I had to drag every word out of those reluctant Russians!



## CHAPTER III

# Tyotya Shura

THERE IS no need for me to tell you the story of Stalingrad: Stalingraders can speak for themselves—if they will. And they will if you build a fire under them; which is what, figuratively speaking, I did. So now I will just try to pass on to you the stories they told me on the battle-scarred heights of Mamayev Kurgan, in the Stalingrad Tractor Factory, in the Red October Steel Mill, in the movies, hospitals, maternity homes, Houses of Culture and apartments of the factory workers, and in the nurseries, kindergartens, schools—and orphanages—where their children are found.

On my own authority as a visitor in May 1950, I'll offer only the briefest of prefatory statements: Stalingrad has been completely rebuilt and new buildings are being added at an amazing rate. At first sight there are still plenty of ruins in what is called the "center" of the city: but it is really the beginning of Stalingrad. For the city stretches some thirty miles long and a mile or so wide along the Volga River and the so-called "center," or main part of town, is at the beginning, where the Volga and the usually dry bed of the Tsaritsa River meet. Investigation reveals, however, that all the industrial facilities of Stalingrad have been restored and amplified until production is now higher than pre-war; as much housing space has been created as there was before the war; the schools and hospitals have been renewed, there is an impressive new movie house in the

"center," and the tractor plant has a magnificent Mount Vernon-like House of Culture dominating the river at the tractor end of the city. Finally, the streets of Stalingrad have been lined with several-year-old acacias which were in fragrant bloom when I was there. Many of the remaining ruins, moreover, turn out to have been left for last because they mark the lines of a new boulevard system composed of the Joseph Stalin Prospect, over one hundred yards wide, parallel to the Volga, running the full thirty-mile length of the city, and a cross-boulevard that will cut the long boulevard at right angles and run down to the Volga through the "center" of Stalingrad. Shoppers already throng the four-storey Univermag department store which was a pile of rubble when Field Marshal Von Paulus gave himself up in the headquarters he had established in its basement. And when you have seen what Stalingrad has rebuilt since 1943, you look at the model they have made of the city they plan, and you listen to the dates they have set for each task, and you know it will be just like that and just when they say.

So of course what I wanted to know was, how did you do it? And the answer was one word: Cherkassova! Did a woman named Cherkassova rebuild Stalingrad? Not exactly. But she started a movement. . . . Now I had already been in Russia long enough to have observed a curious Soviet phenomenon: somehow, when a big job is planned, a job so big that outsiders scoff and write it off as fantastic beyond accomplishment, a movement starts. And the movement leads to the successful fulfillment of the impossible plan. These movements are a great secret weapon of war and peace wielded by the Soviet Union. So I was eager to meet this exceptional—and therefore typical—Russian woman of the Age of Construction. I wanted to know what kind of person starts such a movement, what gives it that not easily explained quality that catches the people's imagination and enlists their unlimited energy.

I found Alexandra Cherkassova in a kindergarten that takes care of some hundred children; she is the business head of the institution. Thirty-eight years old, with two children of her

own, she has a strong frame and shoulders that make you think she is bigger than she is—which is not small. Her face is easily acceptable as Russian (I often amused myself in the Soviet Union by noting how many people didn't look particularly Russian, wouldn't be remarked as "Slav types" if seen in, say, New York) and is somewhat pockmarked. Her eyes are blue and frank, her manner unpretentious, direct. She is just what she seems, an ordinary worker who finds being interviewed a kind of torture and cannot volunteer her own story. "Ask me questions and I'll answer them," she proposed. And when, over a cup of tea, I stopped asking questions, she was equally direct: "Is our business finished?"

Born in the steppe some sixty miles from Stalingrad, Cherkassova had never been to school. Hired out at the age of nine to the tight-fisted, ignorant peasants the Russians call *kulaks* (fists), she had always known a life of the hardest kind of manual labor. She loaded ships in Astrakhan on the Caspian and Murmansk on Barents Fjord, worked on the newly-collectivized farms of her native Zubovka when there were only camels and horses to do the work that tractors would later do, and worked in a Stalingrad factory at work the government subsequently forbade women to do because it was too hard. She married in 1836 and gave birth to a daughter in 1837 and another in 1838. When the war began she was working with a tree-planting crew for a machine and tractor station located on Mamayev Kurgan, the strategic heights dominating Stalingrad. And there Cherkassova and her small children continued to live as the Germans drew closer and closer to Stalingrad. Her husband was killed in action outside Kharkov twelve days before the Germans reached Stalingrad, but she learned that only in November—when there was no time for mourning.

The first big bombing that announced the beginning of the Battle of Stalingrad took place on Sunday, August 23, 1842. There was a pause, then next day the large-scale bombing was renewed and for four days and nights there was not a second's interruption. The very first blasts overturned a kettle of hot water on Cherkassova's stove and so badly scalded four-year-

old Nina and five-year-old Leda that she feared they would lose their legs. Yet as the bombing left no choice, they abandoned the shelter of their home and took, like all other Stalingraders, to trenches and dugouts. When the bombing was over, there was still no choice, for there were no longer any houses in Stalingrad.

The entrenched people of Stalingrad—mostly women and children—had to be fed, and Cherkassova tackled this job. Herself holed-up with her own children on Mamayev Kurgan, she helped organize a flour service that brought bread to the people who lived in the rubble that had been Stalingrad. That kept her busy until most of the civilians had been evacuated.

When the fighting closed in on Mamayev Kurgan, Cherkassova was ordered to take her children and cross the Volga to safety. She replied with the Russian equivalent of, "Nuts," adding, "I'll stay right here and I'll defend Stalingrad." She spoke not only for herself but for a group of women and children. And so it was that a strange colony of civilians lived on bloody Mamayev Kurgan throughout the Battle of Stalingrad. There were seven women, all but one of whom had children, a dozen kids in all. Two of the older boys, Vova and Vasya, eleven and fourteen respectively, attached themselves to Cherkassova and aided her in all her dangerous and heavy work. One of the women, Dolgapolava, remained in the ten-yard strip of trench that was their home, to take care of the smaller children. The children behaved—like children. In any lull in the fighting they emerged from their trench, located some hundred yards from the German positions, to play in the shellholes and the shattered tanks and to gather jagged pieces of metal from exploded shells and bombs. At the first warning whine of a mortar, a cry would go up: "Vanyushka is howling!" And the children of Mamayev Kurgan would scramble for the trench.

The "peacetime" job of feeding civilians ended in mid-September. Now the Germans were entrenched so close to the Russian lines on the hill that they could be heard in Cherkassova's trench yelling, "Russky, you bul-bul," meaning: "Russian, you will go glub-glub," that is, we will drive you into

the Volga to drown. And the Russians yelled back, "Hey Germans, are you thirsty? We are nearer to Berlin than you are to the Volga!" The women of Mamayev worked to make that boast good. All night they hauled munitions up from the Volga, where the supply-barges unloaded, to the frontline depots on Mamayev Kurgan. On return trips they took down to the barges the wounded who had to be evacuated across the Volga. Cherkassova herself was the most fearless first-aid worker combat troops could ask. The men who fought at Mamayev Kurgan, the survivors who still write to her from all over the Soviet Union, will tell you that the soldier wounded in the night always cried out, "Tyotya Shura, Tyotya Shura, (Auntie Alexandra) where are you?" They will tell you how she carried men on her strong back, when the ground was bare, from the very lines of the Germans and, when the snow was on the ground, rigged up a sledge to continue her rescue work. They will tell you that it was easier to take chances because you knew that Tyotya Shura would not let you bleed to death all alone out there.

Perhaps the mere presence of that curious colony of women and children who never once doubted that Stalingrad would hold, was of more importance than the actual services they rendered. They were there: that was the proof of their faith for had any one of them lost confidence at any time, that very night the doubter could have crossed the Volga. The soldiers loved them. On New Year's Eve, when Russian children traditionally have a "Christmas tree," the soldiers brought to the little trench a barren, leafless tree (there are no evergreens in the steppe); somehow they rigged up a generator and brightened the tree with lights, hung it with cookies, a bit of sugar, German canned goods, anything they could find, and made a surprise party for the colony on the hill. That night there were childish laughter and a touch of home on Mamayev Kurgan where the roar and flash of the battle stretching for miles around Stalingrad never paused to ring out the old year.

The Germans were finally driven from Stalingrad and the survivors taken prisoner in the last days of January and the

first days of February, 1943, but there was still nowhere to live but the wartime trenches. So the colony remained on Mamayev Kurgan. Cherkassova did not just sit there, but immediately found urgent work to do. She set out to collect the orphaned children scattered through the trenches of Stalingrad and the whole surrounding area in which the battle had raged. What strange maturity mere infants achieve in such circumstances! Cherkassova and a friend came upon a little girl sitting near a dead woman. She was two years old but looked even younger and they wondered how to communicate with her.

"Aren't you cold here?" Cherkassova inquired.

"No," replied the tot, "but it's dull!"

Then, as they made as if to turn, the baby said: "Take me with you because my mama is killed!"

For these children who had learned what death is, Cherkassova found emergency lodgings wherever tunneling would open the basement of a ruined building or a missing window could be replaced with a mirror to make the room habitable in the bitter cold. When those first days were over and it was time to begin restoring "normal" life in Stalingrad, seven hundred children had passed through her hands enroute to orphanages.

Cherkassova did not lose time asking what was next. She organized a kindergarten and while helping run it got two more kindergartens started. Then, one June day, she pointed out to some of her colleagues a certain ruined apartment house. It was known to all Stalingraders as "Pavlov's House" because there Sergeant Pavlov and a handful of men—I have heard seven and I have heard ten—stood off the whole power of the German Army and would not let the Nazis, who had come so far, travel just a few score yards more to the Volga River.

"It's a shame that house should stand in ruins," said Cherkassova. The women agreed, so Cherkassova went to the chairman of the District Soviet, or rather chairlady, and said: "We women of Stalingrad want to rebuild Pavlov's House." The chairlady replied, "*Pazhalista*," which can mean "Please," "You're welcome," or "Go to hell," in Russian, but here very

clearly translates as, "Hop to it." And the next day, Sunday, June 13, Cherkassova and her colleagues hopped.

That was how it began. All the women who worked in the three kindergartens were there, seventeen of them. Or sixteen women and a girl, for Cherkassova's friend, Martinova, who had five sons at the front and three girls at home, had brought along her thirteen-year-old daughter. And thus far it was all simply a thing that Cherkassova had been moved to do and had done. But now something not of her planning entered into it, for they were not unnoticed.

In Russia, man-bites-dog is not news. News is when someone starts to build something or builds something faster or better than anyone else has done. Or, when, as is in this case, someone starts to build something that wouldn't be built if you waited for trained construction workers and the government to do it. So there were reporters at Pavlov's House when Cherkassova and her crew started to work. They saw the women gathering and carting off loads of rubble; they saw them carrying 125-pound sacks of cement up from the Volga; they saw them when, moved by the still legible messages and slogans Pavlov's men had painted on the walls of "their" house to taunt the Germans, they took a pledge henceforth to spend all their spare time rebuilding this house as a monument to Stalingrad's heroes. The reporters took all this down and invited Cherkassova to speak to the people of Stalingrad through the press.

Being interviewed was painful to Cherkassova, but talking to the people of Stalingrad was no occasion for self-consciousness. She knew them and they knew her. Had she not brought them bread when they lived in the trenches? Had she not defended Stalingrad in her post on Mamayev Kurgan? Had she not gathered their orphans the moment the guns were quiet? They had saved their city together and now here it was in ruins. So Cherkassova said a simple thing simply; she proposed to the people of Stalingrad that they join her in rebuilding Stalingrad on their own time after working hours.

Cherkassova's appeal, appearing in *Stalingrad Pravda* (not connected with *Pravda*, the central organ of the Communist

Party which is issued in Moscow) of June 14, started Stalingrad on the road to rebirth. When Cherkassova and her team appeared at Pavlov's House after working hours that day, they found workers from various factories, and housewives, and bookkeepers, already there and at work. A professor brought his battered car and drove it down to the river bank to load it with building materials and unload it at Pavlov's House. A 72-year-old woman told Cherkassova: "I won't be left out of it; I'll work, too!" And the work spread to other sites and Cherkassova's women became leaders of new brigades and they went to night school to learn the tricks of the building trades, and by September, when they finished work on Pavlov's House, the number of brigades had grown beyond count, and soon every man, woman and child in Stalingrad was putting in a full day's work after his regular day's work and the city was springing up again out of what had seemed a hopeless expanse of brick-dust and tangled steel.

In Stalingrad alone, in the first year of the movement, it is estimated that 800,000 man-hours of free, voluntary, patriotic labor went into the restoration of the city *each day!* Now there were perhaps 150,000 people, counting the very old and the very young, in the city in that first year after the battle, so that means every able-bodied man, woman and child must have worked eight hours a day, over and above his regular day's work, that whole year. It is almost impossible to believe that, but it is equally impossible to believe your eyes when you see that Stalingrad *has* been rebuilt.

Nor was Stalingrad the only city to do this. The name Cherkassova became a household word throughout the Soviet Union. The ruined cities of Leningrad and Kiev and Kharkov and Rostov heard it. So did Minsk and Murmansk, Odessa and Sebastopol. They sent delegations to Stalingrad to find out what it was all about and how it was organized and to get Cherkassova to come to their cities and tell them how to do it. And the Cherkassov movement sparked the reconstruction of the devastated areas and today there are no devastated areas. In Moscow, which wasn't so hard hit, I could see no war dam-



age. In Leningrad, a martyred city, I saw just two adjoining houses in the city proper which for some reason hadn't been restored. Outside the city there is plenty to recall the war, but in the city itself almost nothing. I flew low over Kharkov and landed at its airport several times, and from the air could see lots of new brick construction but no war ruins. There may be some, but even one glance at cities as mutilated as these had been, would reveal ruins if reconstruction were not very far advanced indeed.

The restoration of the mutilated areas has not terminated the Cherkassov movement. Everywhere in Stalingrad I saw people going to put in their pledged quota of hours on building work; Cherkassova's own brigade, for instance, had done nineteen hours of work up to May 9 and had a quota of one hundred—a very small stint compared to the hours they put in those first years, but multiply it by a population of several hundred thousand and see how many man-hours of work it is.

Cherkassova has been honored in many ways for that simple gesture of patriotism that inspired the second miracle of Stalingrad. In June, three years after she initiated the rebuilding of Pavlov's House, ex-Sergeant Pavlov came to Stalingrad from his distant home in the Novgorod region, to "receive" the house from her in a formal ceremony. Then the new tenants of Pavlov's House, including one of the twenty-nine old tenants who had been huddling in the basement of the house the day Pavlov took over (he rescued them from the Germans and got them safely across the Volga), gave a party for these two famous heroes of the hero-city. Thus Stalingrad honored Cherkassova. she was elected a deputy to the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Republic. Thus Russia honored her.

One thing I asked Cherkassova very particularly, and you might like to know the answer. At each stage of her story I asked: "Were you a member of the Communist Party?" And the answer was "No." Perhaps Cherkassova is *now* a member of the Communist Party. I don't know. But when she was seventeen years old and going to Murmansk and Astrakhan to carry backbreaking loads wherever the country's development

plans most required it, she was not a *Komsomolka* (Communist Youth). When, at the beginning of the war, she worked as a cleaning-woman volunteer in a hospital she was not a Communist. When she served on Mamayev Kurgan she was not a Communist. When she started rebuilding Pavlov's House and thereby started a great movement, she was not a Communist.

If she had been a Communist, I would have thought nothing of it. Nothing more natural. But the fact that she was not gives me pause. I find it of great interest and significance. For it seems to me to square with what I observed throughout my stay in Russia: that not just the Communists but the great majority of the common people are convinced that something new and heroic is under construction in the Soviet Union. Not just the Communists but the great mass of Russian workers are willing to build it on their own time, willing to defend it, willing to rebuild it—again on their own time—when enemies tear it down. The only possible explanation I can find is that they are convinced they are building something of their own. Is there any other way to explain the Cherkassov movement, the war-time colony on Mamayev Kurgan, the sacrifices and heroism that made the wartime and peacetime miracles of Stalingrad come to pass?

## CHAPTER IV

# How Miracles are Made

STALINGRAD ITSELF was a wilderness after the battle. But the tractor factory and the steel mill were a tangled and awesome ruin even by comparison with the city proper. Until you have gone through the city's two principal industrial establishments that were put together again after the war had knocked them apart, you cannot appreciate the task Stalingrad undertook. Nor is it sufficient just to go through the plants. You have also to get some idea of what role they play in the life of the city, and that requires an acquaintance, however slight, with the facts of Stalingrad's history.

Tsaritsyn was renamed Stalingrad. Had you visited it then, you might have seen nothing but the old Tsaritsyn. Yet there was something different. The ferment of the Soviet five-year plans had begun. The first of the plans was publicly launched three years later, and among the many ambitious provisions of the national plan there was one for turning Stalingrad into a big, modern industrial city. A huge tractor factory was to be built and a small, pre-revolutionary steel mill was to be turned into a great modern one, capable of supplying the metal needed by the tractor plant.

The plan was carried out. The Stalingrad Tractor Factory was built and the Red October Steel Mill was rebuilt (it bears so little relation to the old mill that it may, for all practical purposes, be treated as wholly new construction. It sounds so

simple to say they were built! But Russia had no army of skilled construction workers to put up the buildings, no trained mechanics to assemble the factory machines. A thousand projects of equal or greater size were under construction in the Soviet Union at exactly the same time. There was only one way to get the Stalingrad job done and that was the way they get all their big jobs done in Russia, the way they rebuilt Stalingrad after the battle—by a great volunteer movement. In those days the word *Komsomol* was the answer. The *Komsomoltsi* or Communist Youth came from all over Russia to the cities of the plan and they performed miracles of labor and on June 17, 1930 the first tractor rolled off the production line of the Stalingrad Tractor Factory. The new steel mill was born within a few days of the tractor factory.

Just eleven years later, the great German war machine was hurled at Russia. Eleven years is not a great time to convert peasants—and peasants of the Dark Ages, at that!—into skilled workers and designers and managers of modern factories. Yet the people in the thousands of new Russian factories proved able to meet any test. The Stalingrad Tractor Factory not only swiftly and smoothly switched to tank production—and the quality of Russian tanks is by now pretty well appreciated in the United States—but it learned overnight how to make many complicated parts that it had formerly bought ready-made. The all-important electrical parts of their Diesel tractors, for instance, had always been supplied by Leningrad factories. Soon Leningrad was invested and unable to continue manufacturing electrical equipment for the whole Soviet Union. Other parts came from Kharkov, reduced to ruins and occupied by the Germans early in the war. In exactly forty-eight hours the factory solved such a problem. It began the manufacture of the electrical equipment it needed and produced quantities great enough to supply other factories. It became, for the first time, a completely self-contained factory.

The first year of the war passed and the Stalingrad Tractor Factory celebrated its twelfth birthday in the practical Russian fashion. That is to say, the birthday keynote was a pledge to

increase tank production and to do whatever else the defense of the country might require. That it might be necessary to defend the factory and the city, Stalingrad plainly foresaw. In the factory and mill, workers' battalions had been organized and from among their own number the workers of the tractor factory had organized and trained a tank brigade. It was, indeed, one of the leaders of that brigade, its political commissar, Alex Stepanov, who showed me how and where the tractor factory had fought its battles in war and peace. (This is the Stepanov of the orphanage story.) He and the writer Lobachov are walking encyclopedias of Stalingradiana and they made it possible for me to meet many other veterans of the great battle and especially to learn what most interested me: what part the common people played in all the battles of Stalingrad. One of the things the people did in that summer when the Germans were advancing toward Stalingrad, was to build defense works on Mamayev Kurgan which is a part of the city itself, and on the relatively distant approaches to the city. If the Germans broke through the lines of the Red Army, the people of Stalingrad intended to defend their city.

For all that, the optimism of human nature never quite permitted Stalingraders to believe that the Germans would actually reach Stalingrad; at any rate, it never let them say to themselves, "Today may be the day." That is the only way one can explain the lazy, peacetime mood and air of Stalingrad on August 23, when the Battle of Stalingrad began. True, it was Sunday, a warm, quiet, Sunday without the usual hot, dry wind blowing across the steppe to plague the city with dust. And on any ordinary Sunday you would have taken for granted the things they did that day: thousand of Stalingraders crossed the Volga to the beach; the movies had special programs for those children not away in camps; Lobachov was away hunting and Stepanov was pottering around the house. But this Sunday was no ordinary Sunday—the Hitlerites were only twenty-five miles away!

That is, they *thought* the Germans were twenty-five miles away. That was where they were at last report, two days

earlier. What the people of Stalingrad did not know, was that at dawn that very day, German tanks had broken through the Russian lines on the Don River. In the evening the enemy drove straight across the steppe toward Stalingrad. It was 6 p.m. when word reached the factory. Stepanov and Nikolai Bichugov, an engineer who commanded the tank brigade, assembled the worker-tankists. They got into finished and inspected tanks fresh from the production line, and rolled out to meet the Germans.

While the brigade was taking up positions prepared some time earlier along the railroad, well out into the steppe, Bichugov and Stepanov, reconnoitering on foot, stumbled across the first Germans to reach the outskirts of Stalingrad. At the Mokra Yametchka, one of two big ravines or arroyos that traverse the Stalingrad country, the tankists saw three reconnaissance cars arrive. Five Germans got out to look around. From a ditch, the tankists watched the Germans moving rather uncertainly in their direction. The Germans, however, decided to stop and go into one of the houses perched on the inside of the ravine. In this house lived one Ilena Osipova and her ten-year-old daughter. They were in the garden, picking vegetables, and had not noticed the German soldiers approaching. As one of the Germans stepped over the fence, Osipova looked up. As far as she was concerned, remember, there were no Germans nearer to Stalingrad than twenty-five miles. What Russians had already suffered from the wanton brutality of the Nazis crowded instantly into Osipova's mind and her eyes no sooner focussed on the German stepping over her fence, than her throat gave out a cry of fear and her legs started for the house. The little girl, even before she saw the German soldier, automatically echoed her mother's scream. The German drew his automatic.

What he intended, no one will ever know. Osipova and her child were, in any event, not destined to become the first Stalingrad victims of Nazi barbarism, for Bichugov had the German covered and his first shot killed the first enemy soldier to open hostilities in Stalingrad. A second German was at that

instant stepping over the fence into Osipova's yard, but he got out in record time and took cover. The rest of the Germans seem to have run away when they heard the shooting. The remaining German soldier began stalking Bichugov. Both men constantly shifted position as stealthily as possible, but the German was the first to find himself in position to drop his adversary. Unfortunately for the Nazi, he did not know that the stalker was also stalked; at the critical moment, it was not his gun that went off but Stepanov's and it was not Bichugov who fell but the nameless German soldier.

The tankists then walked down the slope to Osipova's house. Stepanov said to her: "Take your child across the Volga. The Battle of Stalingrad has begun!"

And so it had. In their positions on both sides of the railway where many of the defense works still remain and the steppe is still dotted with mangled tanks and the scrap metal of war, the worker-soldiers of the Stalingrad Tractor Factory and the Red October Steel Mill had only a short time to wait for the enemy. A column came down the railroad track. There were ten tanks, some thirty motorcycles and 150 trucks carrying infantry. Not far behind was a second column containing two hundred truckloads of infantry supported by two tank regiments. The Germans evidently anticipated no resistance. But the tractor-tankmen opened fire; the civilian soldiers poured murderous fire from their trenches and from the machine-gun emplacements so well prepared in advance. And in less than thirty minutes they had killed more than a thousand Germans, set many of their tanks on fire and forced the enemy to retire four miles.

There was fighting in that sector for the next twenty days and it was, indeed, the main battlefront for a week, during which the Germans lost between two and three thousand men each day. The worker-soldiers held the line only for the first three days of the battle. After that the Red Army took over the direction of the defense of Stalingrad. The tank brigade then simply volunteered as a unit and was incorporated in the Red Army. The organized worker-battalion from the steel mill

did the same; it became part of the 39th Division. In addition to these first fighting units of the two big Stalingrad industrial establishments, many workers in those last August days—headed by virtually every Communist Party member, it being the Party's job, as they understand it, always to show the way—volunteered for service. More than 1,000 such volunteers from the steel mill alone, for example, accompanied the mill's worker-battalion into the 39th Division.

Until the Germans were expelled from Stalingrad, then, the Stalingrad Tractor Factory and the Red October Steel Mill were simply major battlegrounds within the larger battleground of Stalingrad. Key technicians and highly skilled workers were evacuated to the Urals, where factories moved bodily from the war-overrun region were going up at a simply incredible rate. Stalingrad settled down to arms-in-hand defense as its main business.

I do not intend to tell the story of the Battle of Stalingrad. For my purpose here, it is not the battle itself, but the fate of the two factories in that battle, that is of interest. That fate was—total destruction. The tractor factory was a ruin beyond description when the battle ended. Four days and nights of uninterrupted bombing on an unheard-of scale had levelled Stalingrad. But months and months of shelling and bombing plus some actual combat within the plant had smashed the buildings of the Stalingrad Tractor Factory beyond recognition. Foreign visitors, even some months later, looking out in awe over the vast expanse of ruins, said the sites could never be used again. Or, in the case of Donald Nelson, whose onetime post as director of war production in the United States gave his voice a certain authority, said that it would take fifteen years to start production “unless we help you.” And even in that case, perhaps six years.

They just didn't know the Russians. Perhaps just because the average technological level of the Soviet Union still can't compare to that of the United States, Russian producers are better at improvising. We aren't used to doing things for ourselves. When we plan production, it is on the basis of utilizing



a great many ready-made machines, processes, parts. And if we found ourselves, as did the men of the tractor plant and steel mill of Stalingrad, without access to anything ready-made, with no possibility of obtaining even supplies of raw materials, I wonder if we would say, as they did, "We must immediately get back into production." And do it. Which they did.

I don't in the least believe that technology is the secret of Stalingrad. You must look in a different realm for the clue. But I won't drag you into a discussion about it. I will just tell you what happened in the tractor plant and after that I'll go back and tell you what happened in the steel mill. I first heard the tractor story in the machine-tool department of that establishment. There Nicholas Pavluk, the superintendent of the department, was answering my questions about himself, when the war got into it somehow, as it somehow always does in Stalingrad. Now forty years old, the son of an agricultural laborer, he came to the factory as a technician in April, when the plant was not yet a year old. He has three children, boys; but he didn't say it that way, he said "three tankists," which is a play on a popular Russian wartime song, and that was how we got into the war. And from the war into reconstruction. And from Pavluk to Stepanov! For Stepanov has a gift for telling a story and as he lived it all—all except the six months he lay in a hospital severely wounded—he *can* tell it. He and Pavluk told me they had first gathered together the machines that had been overtaken by battle before they could be evacuated and had been lying around, rusting and taking a wartime beating, throughout the siege. We walked into the huge shop and saw bullet-scarred lathes. But that was only a handful. They had to fish the bulk of their machines out of the Volga! When the machinery had been evacuated, that part that was not going to the Urals had been greased and dropped in the river near the opposite shore. Just in case. And now, in the still freezing weather of February and March, working without machinery capable of lifting such heavy machines, the tractor-men had to get their lathes out of the river. They didn't even have trucks.

Nothing stopped them. At that time the whole country was sending gifts to the heroic city. Freight cars and trucks on each of which was scrawled, "To our dear Stalingrad," came from the farthest parts of the Soviet Union. The tractor-men commandeered such trucks and impressed them into service to haul up their buried mechanical treasures. They got some twelve per cent of the plant's machines installed, and immediately went into production. By the time June 17 rolled around, the factory's birthday, the Stalingrad Tractor Plant was able to send to the front a shipment of tanks, and every tank was proudly labelled, "Stalingrad's answer!" Thereafter they turned out new trainloads of tanks each day.

This is quite enough of a miracle for ordinary people. But the tractor-men were apologetic about it! That was no real production job, they hinted. It was no job to find tanks around Stalingrad, and all they needed was repairs. Toward the end of the battle, moreover, the Germans were abandoning tanks less and less damaged. (You can imagine the miles and miles of battered war machines and scraps of bombs and shells and whole dud-bombs and unexploded shells that must have surrounded the factories in those days, when I tell you that I saw the scrap yards of both the steel mill and the tractor plant, now, seven years later, still receiving the thousands of tons of scrap metal they need in the shape of broken tanks and war wreckage from the battlefields of Stalingrad!) So the tractor-men won't claim they really "produced" tanks; what they want to talk about is tractors.

From the very beginning, their minds were on the job of getting back to tractor production. With the victory at Stalingrad, the Red Army must inevitably roll westward, liberating the great Soviet granary, and tractors would be desperately needed to win the battle of agriculture in the land ravished by the Nazi occupiers. Again I say, we foreigners, looking at that plant, would never have believed they were serious—or sane—when they pledged to produce tractors by the next birthday of the Stalingrad Tractor Factory. Not one building had a roof nor were there undamaged walls to hold a roof. The

workers began each day by cleaning the snow off their machines. And when the winter ended and the dry steppe summer began, the dust took the place of snow. Nor did they have any place to live. At first, they lived in the plant, sleeping where they could find shelter. A good trench was a privileged apartment. A usable basement of a destroyed house was a palace. In fact, such were generally reserved to some social purpose, such as the launching of the first post-battle school. One can hardly blame Donald Nelson and other foreigners who did not believe them when they said they would deliver tractors in June 1944.

But they meant it. They had something called morale that we have never been able to value to the full. By "they" I mean not just the men then in the tractor factory, but Stalingraders then scattered over the Soviet Union and Soviet people in general. Stalingrad workers who had been evacuated to the Urals were so eager to get back and help that they wrote to Stalin and Molotov desperately seeking their intervention. More *Komsomoltsi* volunteered than could be accepted. In fact, high as is the Soviet regard for the Communist Youth, a very stern weeding policy was followed in selecting from among the Komsomol volunteers those who would be permitted to go to Stalingrad. Only those judged physically and morally capable of standing up to the job were taken. For just consider. If you are in the army, you don't expect the comforts of home. But the army does provide your food, your clothing, and such lodging as there is. Volunteers for the restoration of the Stalingrad Tractor Factory would have to solve all those problems for themselves in a city where the stores and the normal supply of essentials had all been smashed. And they would have to solve these problems without taking time off—day or night—from their main task of reconstruction. The revolution has produced such men in Russia. Or perhaps it has only discovered them and trained them; perhaps we could do as well if we had as good a reason.

Be that as it may, the factory workers and the volunteers who had come to do the building work, pledged that they

would work day and night, weekdays and Sundays, resting only when they must, to fulfill their June promise. And they worked so well that by the beginning of 1944, you could already see something that looked like an industrial establishment emerging from the ruins. Yet it still looked like years of work ahead to get ready for production and it was less than six months to the factory's birthday. So the workers put on extra steam. In April and May, thousands of them did not go home at all. When they were just too tired to go on, they rested in dormitories that they had organized in various parts of the plant where restoration had advanced enough to permit that use. They set up their own dining rooms. As for supplies they made do with whatever came in on the trains "to restore our dear Stalingrad!" and the *Komsomoltsi* kept coming, volunteering as for front-line duty and bringing with them front-line morale.

Needless to say, on the morning of June 17, the first post-battle tractor came off the assembly line. And on the factory's next birthday, hardly one month after V-E Day, the factory was awarded the Order of the People's War, its third decoration. Stepanov and Pavluk were among the several hundred workers, engineers, clerks and department party chiefs who received individual awards, the Order of the Worker's Glory. That would be a strange title for an American decoration, wouldn't it? Yet somehow it doesn't seem strange in the Stalingrad Tractor Factory.

And perhaps still less strange in the Red October Steel Mill. Getting back to work here was a seeming impossibility even by comparison with the tractor plant. The enemy had occupied the apartment houses and other buildings in what we may call "tractor city," but had never succeeded in penetrating more than the fringe of the production area. The damage visited on the factory was suffered in its role of a defense fortress. But in the steel mill, in the actual grounds and buildings of the production plant, a great battle was fought, with buildings repeatedly changing hands and suffering new ruin with each change. From the time the big bombings of Stalingrad started,

on August 23, 1942, until January 1, 1943 when the mill was liberated, it was under an uninterrupted rain of metal. Military experts have estimated that the Germans poured more metal on the tractor factory alone than they expended for the conquest of the whole of Europe. When you recall how easily the Germans overran Europe, that becomes a little less startling. But it was a lot of metal, all the same. Yet the metal dropped on the mill was more than ten times the weight of that dropped on the tractor factory! The direct assault on the mill itself began October 13 and about a week later the Germans first penetrated the grounds of the factory from the south. Eventually they occupied three-quarters of the mill, and, naturally, made a supreme effort to wipe out the quarter occupied by the Russians. For two and a half months the mill was the regular crossing of the Soviet 62nd Army, as it built up power for the counter-offensive. Then, when the tide turned, the mill suffered again. For if the Germans were encircled and captured in many areas of Stalingrad, and thus did no great final damage in those areas, it was otherwise with the mill. There the Germans had to be attacked and driven out in a building-to-building final battle. The already hopelessly tangled structural steel was now twisted into knots; the rubble was turned to dust and the dust to powder.

This was the mill on New Year's Day, when the handful of top executives and technicians of the mill recrossed the Volga. They had been on duty with Army Headquarters on the other side of the river because their intimate knowledge of the mill's underground installations was of great military value. They now returned to their civil duties. They surveyed the ruins—and went to work. Life in the tractor factory when reconstruction began was a vacation compared to life in the mill. The grounds were one mass of minefields. Where there were no German mines there were Russian ones. And if they could chart paths of movement through the minefields, what of the tens of thousands of shells and bombs buried in the most improbable places and not subject to charting? Even now, seven years later, they find explosives when they dig holes to

plant trees or do other work. While I was there the mill began some construction work on the bank of the Volga, and they began it by sending out the sapper squad which they maintain on a permanent basis. But even the utmost caution could not prevent mishaps, as we shall see, during reconstruction.

If explosives were an immediate danger in the mill, dead bodies were a potential one. There were sixty thousand frozen corpses buried in the ruins of the mill! Sixty thousand bodies that must be removed before the spring thaw. This was the first job to which factory director Peter Matrovosyan and his top aides addressed themselves when the liberating 39th Guards Division surrendered the mill to them. They gathered together seven hundred workers to do this preliminary dirty work. From the government they obtained 150 tents, each holding twenty to twenty-five persons, fitted some of these up with wooden pallets for beds and made others into mess-halls. The director and his aides set up offices and lodgings in a usable part of a basement of an otherwise wrecked building. Still others who came to get things started, found living space in the trenches. And so they reached the spring.

Their next job was to prepare winter quarters not only for those already on the job but for the more who must come. They got some wood that came floating down the Kama River (an arm of the Volga) as one of the many gifts then arriving for Stalingrad, and with it they built seventeen barracks between June and October. The barracks housed many of the workers that winter, but not all of them. Wherever there was a habitable hole in the ground, there you would find a Red October steelworker.

And now they could turn to the task of restoring production. But how? If you had no furnace to melt metal, how would you shape parts to repair the broken furnaces? Obviously, they would have to patch together a furnace out of unbroken parts. They cleared a place in the ruins, put down a foundation and dug through the wreckage all over the grounds until they found enough pieces to stick together one little working fur-

nace. Now they had a workshop and could begin repairing the furnaces and mills.

But who would have believed that there was anything susceptible of repair in that unbroken waste? Not the foreign visitors, certainly! When United States Ambassador Admiral Standley, and later Donald Nelson, visited the mill, they reacted as they had reacted at the tractor factory. But when Nelson expressed the opinion that it would take them years to get back into production and suggested that it would be quicker to start all over again at some other site, the Russians had a bombshell ready.

"But we are in production already," they remarked innocently. "In a small way," they added apologetically.

Nelson had to be shown before he would believe that somewhere in those hopelessly tangled, roofless ruins, the orderly, organized discipline of steel manufacture was going on. He was shown. Since July 1, they had had two small furnaces, a rolling mill and a sheet mill in operation! They were already giving aid to the front as well as making metal to help rebuild the mill. And to anticipate a little, they reached prewar production by the end of , passed it by twelve per cent a few months later and this year will exceed pre-war levels by thirty-six per cent.

How far away 1843—and even 1846—seem now! In those days they were literally walking on dynamite. The explosives in the mill were always threatening to undo their work. An entire department of the rolling mill, for instance, was cleared. Then when they started to remove the rubble at one end where a wall had been smashed, they narrowly missed detonating a bomb buried in the heap, a bomb large enough to have wrecked the entire department. Again, in the middle of they restored Furnace Number Five to operation. But who knew that a 225-pound bomb was lying beneath it? In February the bomb exploded. By some strange break it failed to damage the furnace, but it smashed a good deal of the underground construction so important to a steel smelter.

Well, whatever the obstacles, there is no doubt that they overcame them. The mill is certainly in full-scale operation. I saw the steel poured and the hot metal processed by the blooming and rolling mills. Nothing I saw would lead me to doubt the claim in Stalingrad that the city's production, with the tractor factory and steel mill as its main factors, is now a time and a half as great as it was before the war.

The job was not done when the productive facilities had been restored. The factories were and are directly responsible for the housing of their workers, for their education, for their amusement and cultural development. All these things had to be restored. The Red October Steel Mill, for instance, has seven schools, maintains six fulltime doctors, a clinic and a hospital. It is now building a House of Technique for the factory intelligentsia, after which a very large Palace of Culture and a stadium with a special building devoted to physical culture are to be erected.

The visitor to Stalingrad knows they will build these things just as they say they will, for the tractor factory has already done them. I rode many times on many errands through the streets of the tractor city, seeing for myself that all these things have been restored. I went to their new movie houses and theatres; I watched all the study "circles" of children and adults at work in their magnificent white House of Culture and Rest perched on the high bank of the Volga; I visited their boys' schools and girls' schools and engineering institutes. And I visited many of their homes and talked to the workers and their families.

I was there for just over two weeks in late May. Both the tractor factory and the mill were preparing to celebrate their twentieth birthdays the following month. They prepared, again in the Russian fashion, by pledging higher output by June 17, more efficient production with less waste. And though the world situation was growing darker and darker, they were still turning out peacetime products. The higher production of the factory was for the collective and state farms; the steel of the mill was being made into tractors and autos. I have no



doubt the Soviet Union is militarily prepared for any eventuality. But I report as an observed fact that the hysteria under which we labor here has not overtaken the Soviet people. They have not been stampeded into abandoning the production of tractors in Stalingrad for the production of tanks. They follow the events in Korea and elsewhere; they read what is going on in the world; but they are not worked up to fever pitch. They are not distracted from their work. The job remains the thing. The peaceful building of a better world is on their minds and occupies their hands. You cannot see Stalingrad and doubt that.

## CHAPTER V

# Two Old Men from Tsaritsyn

ENDLESS ARE the futile arguments about Russia and things Russian, infinite the complications when you try to compare things Soviet with things American. Perhaps the arguments have their use; surely comparisons, undertaken with due regard to historical realities, can be enlightening. But neither arguments nor comparisons will help us to understand the one outstanding phenomenon any visitor to the Soviet Union can perceive: that the Russians put their heart in their work in a way Americans don't. They are absolutely convinced they've got something, and they're willing to go far, much farther than any people in the Western world can be persuaded to go, to keep what they have. Now they certainly don't arrive at that conviction by comparing what they have with what Americans have or with what they think Americans have. If they believe in their tomorrow so much that they endure cruel suffering and perform heroic toil, it can only be because they compare their today with their yesterday. Let me tell you how one man in Stalingrad sees it.

Jacob Dolgov was one of the workers I visited in Stalingrad. He has a modern apartment in one of the apartment houses newly built by the Red October Steel Mill to replace the ones built not long before the war and destroyed by the Germans. His married daughter, who is not at work because she has a baby girl to look after for the moment, lives with her father

and mother. This daughter was, at the moment the Nazis crossed the Soviet border, the secretary of the mill director. She volunteered for the Army and served throughout the war. Her decorations are virtually a recital of the fronts on which the Red Army did battle to clear Russia and Eastern Europe of the German invaders, including the Berlin front.

Dolgov also has four sons. One works in the factory in a kind of foreman's job called master-controller of production. He graduated ten-year school whereas the other three sons went further than that. The next son is director of a State farm, one of the large ultra-scientific farms distributed throughout the country as pacemakers and scientific institutes for the collective farms. The third son lives in the Urals where he is an electro-technician in a blooming mill. And the youngest son is in the Army but has already indicated that he has no intention of following a military career.

Dolgov himself is on a long-service pension of 780 rubles a month, on which a family can live, if it has to, in Russia today. He pays 130 rubles a month for his apartment and utilities, forty of which is for rent and the rest for the utilities which include a lot of extras by Russian standards. He does not have to feed and clothe the family on the remaining 650 rubles of his pension, however, for he is not retired. He is at active work in the mill where he is the honored leader of a brigade that employs a new process to clean metal by fire. His actual income, therefore, is an average 2,000 rubles a month.

They spend their money more or less as people in America do, but with a Stalingrad touch. I mean that if here we buy a piece of furniture now and then, to furbish up the home, there they are still trying to replace *all* their furniture, *all* their linens, *all* their clothing. For everything, everything, every stitch and stick they owned, was destroyed. I recall another worker in the same mill whose home I visited—a smelter named Ivan Alyoshkin, who happens to be a Deputy of the Supreme Soviet—and a story he told me. Just before the war, he said, he and his wife built a new cottage. When he went to war, she went elsewhere, so he locked up the house very carefully and put

the key in his pocket. When he came back, he still had his key—but the house wasn't there! All the things you collect in a lifetime gone at a blow! And Dolgov's had been a longer life. So now, with every family in Stalingrad trying to replace everything, and Stalingrad itself matched by a hundred devastated cities all trying to replace everything, Russian factories couldn't turn out all the things people want—and have money to buy—if they produced nothing else but consumer goods.

And how much is made of this situation by our press! And how many a man has made his living writing picayune pieces describing these difficulties as if they were the essence of Soviet life! But as Dolgov looks about his home or as his wife makes a national tour to visit her eight scattered grandchildren, do you suppose they are preoccupied with such stuff? They do indeed say—as we sat about the table it was more than once said—that life is not yet as easy as it was before the war. But in all that really matters, in the showdown, Dolgov's thinking is certainly governed by what he has today, and can see in Stalingrad today, by comparison with the utter misery of yesterday.

Dolgov, and another worker his own age, Ivan Gostushkin, can tell you a story of misery. Both work in the Red October Steel Mill and both began work there the day the mill opened. The day of the week and the month of the year no one now remembers, for that was in the year 1897! Of course it wasn't then the "Red October" but the D.U.M.O.—initials of its corporate name in French—a Franco-Belgian-owned mill popularly known as "the French mill." Nor was Stalingrad then Stalingrad; it was Tsaritsyn.

Tsaritsyn, by the way, does not mean City of the Tsar, as you might have thought and as I took for granted. It got its name from the Tsaritsa River whose junction with the Volga was a logical place for a fortress. Nor is Tsaritsa derived from Tsar. It is not a Russian but a Tatar name, and in the latter language means River of Yellow Sand. Founded for military purposes by Ivan IV in 1555, Tsaritsyn lost its strategic significance and became a small trading town about 1825, with wood

and fish as its chief articles of trade and the Volga as its principal artery.

The Volga, with its cheap transportation, was one reason the foreign capitalists chose Tsaritsyn as the site of their projected mill. Cheap fuel from the nearby oil wells of Baku was another. And they were drawn to invest in Russia generally by the abundance of cheap labor. Labor was cheap because the foreign employer—there was little native industry; the feudal ruling classes of Russia had no talent for it—was permitted to treat his workers like something between slaves and cattle, housing them in sheds, for instance, after the manner of cattle, but working them to death as no prudent man would do with his costly cattle. Yes, even beating it to death, for with the consent of the Russian nobility (who similarly regarded the workers and peasants as mere animals) the operators of the mill treated their Russian “hands” as subhumans, subject to corporal punishment if desired.

For all that, in hungry Tsarist Russia there were scores of applicants for each miserable job. The gates of the factory were always crowded with unemployed. Dolgov, whose father was a sailor on cargo ships plying the Volga—a Volga boatman if you please!—had first been put to work in a kind of hardware store, but he was glad to shift to the new mill. Having got a job, he discovered that he couldn’t get a place to live. The workers’ housing was controlled by the foreigners who ran the mill, and without their intervention you couldn’t get lodging. Of course you didn’t expect to live in Big France. That was the elegant section of Tsaritsyn, heavily guarded by police and reserved to the mill executives and other wealthy people. Nor was Little France for the likes of you. That was where the smaller fry, white-collar workers and the like, struggled manfully to imitate the pomp of their superiors in Big France. The best you could hope for was Russian Village, the pig-sty inhabited by the mill-hands. But you couldn’t just walk in and rent a hole even in Russian Village.

Dolgov found that you had first to go to the factory gates, pay some grafter ten to fifteen rubles, and then you would get

an appointment with Golombievsky, a Pole who was the first administrator of the mill. He would put you on the waiting list for lodging in the workers' sheds or barracks. For the next year and a half Dolgov waited, meanwhile walking five miles to work each morning and dragging five weary miles home at night after upward of twelve hours work.

And what lodging when he got it! It was in a place owned by an assistant of Golombievsky's, on the banks of the Volga, and as Dolgov described it, I visualized a set in the Moscow Art Theatre for the production of Gorki's *The Lower Depths*. It—the set and Dolgov's lodging alike—consisted of one room with some shelves for bunks. Two families lived in the bunks and two or three more on the floor, and there were twenty people in the one room. Dolgov paid eight rubles a month, a third of his earnings, for this luxury. When Dolgov married in 1911 he and his wife first lived in the kitchen of a house whose only other room was occupied by a second family. They continued to make do with these accommodations even when they had two children. In 1914, when they had three children, they obtained two tiny rooms. But to specify the number of rooms tells little. It was always the nightmarish barracks of *The Lower Depths* until the revolution abolished that.

Nor was there any hope of rising from the ranks. Dolgov had had four years of school, and that made him a cultured worker by the standards of Tsarist Russia. He was, accordingly, made a kind of gang-boss for an outdoor crew of ninety men. But you must not think this was a supervisory job; he was no more than the Russian go-between for the foreign bosses and the crew. No Russian could hold a supervisory job; from the top executive posts down through the ranks of foreman there were Poles, Germans, Belgians, Frenchmen. For one thing, foreign industrialists generally exercised extreme care to keep Russians from learning production techniques. But another thing was that these posts, in the corruption that surrounds foreign exploitation, offered many opportunities for graft to the minor executives of the mill.

Take Dolgov's pay-envelope (and they often took it!) It was never full. Whatever your pay—Dolgov says the laborers got sixty-five kopeks a day and he got eighty—you never got more than part of it. There were always the fines. The mill had a list of regulations and a specified fine for violation of each: smoking, fifty kopeks; not putting away tools, seventy-five kopeks. There were more than two hundred of these "don'ts" and "do's," so that it was literally impossible to get through a month without violating at least one of them.

After you got your penalized pay, one-third went for the sub-human lodging the foreigners had so graciously accorded you. With the rest, you could buy whatever you must in the local stores—company stores, please, with company prices. To forget your misery you might drink vodka—in a company tavern. On the side of culture there was, aside from the saloons, nothing but one church.

Yet the workers of those days were not as sodden and hopeless as one might imagine. On the contrary, the mill always produced revolutionary ferment along with its roofing-iron and rails. As early as 1901, there was a strike at the French mill when the operators attempted to force the workers to work on a Sunday just before Easter. And in the revolution of 1905, the dress rehearsal for the great revolution of 1917, the mill-hands were among the active fighters.

This is a good place to pick up the story of our other sixty-eight-year old, for he was an active revolutionary worker that far back. Ivan Gostushkin was an apprentice iron smelter, sometimes working fourteen, sixteen, and even twenty hours a day. Gostushkin was at once involved in the constant clamor of the workers for relief from the starvation and slavery that characterized their condition. He recalls that the struggle did not long remain simply economic. How could it? The Tsarist government collaborated with the mill-owners in smashing every attempt of the workers to better themselves. The plant was overrun with police spies; Dolgov recalls three workers, Chugonov, Yermolayev and Lubimov who were still at their benches one day after the revolution when their names were

found on the captured police rolls in Tsaritsyn. Gostushkin remembers more vividly how the Cossacks rode down their peaceful May Day demonstrations. In the period 1905-1907 and again in 1914, these gatherings of the workers had an unmistakable anti-Tsarist flavor. They were illegal of course, as was all organized activity of the workers aside from their jobs. So the May Day meetings were generally held in the guise of picnics across the Volga where Stalingrad's big Park of Culture and Rest now is. The demonstration in 1914, or it may have been 1912, was held in the steppe surrounding Tsaritsyn on all sides. A few at a time the "picnickers" gathered and when all were there the Cossacks suddenly rode down upon them, beating them and trampling men, women and children under their horses' hooves. In this way, the government and the mill-owners created more determined opposition to oppression, in and outside the mill, than they were able to suppress; they created more last-ditch revolutionary fighters than they were able to kill or cripple.

Gostushkin, for instance, was among the mill-hands who formed the Red Guard, the predecessor of the Red Army, that fought the counter-revolutionaries in Tsaritsyn and set up the Soviet power there in 1917. In fact, the first Red fighting unit in Tsaritsyn was established in the mill itself, from among the hands. Gostushkin was elected a member of the factory committee by its workers, in the first act of political democracy they ever had a chance to perform.

Tsaritsyn, however, was too important a city to be left unchallenged in the hands of the revolutionaries once the wars of intervention, headed by Winston Churchill, had begun. Not that it was so big; it had a population of perhaps 100,000. Nor was the mill that important; it had a 90-ton pouring capacity in its six small furnaces, and employed some 3,000 workers. But possession of Tsaritsyn was decisive strategically, and if you visit Stalingrad's Museum of the Defense of Tsaritsyn and Stalingrad (now two separate museums are planned, but as of this moment the two historical periods are covered in the one small building) you will quickly discover why Lenin dispatched



Stalin himself to defend the city. The reason can be stated in one word: food!

There is displayed, in the museum, a message from the Kremlin dated July 24, 1918. It is in Lenin's handwriting, on a sheet of coarse ruled paper, and a notation at the bottom shows it was received ten minutes after it was dispatched. It says:

TSARITSYN  
STALIN

SEND FISH MEAT **VEGETABLES** GENERALLY  
ALL PRODUCTS **POSSIBLE** AS MUCH AS POS-  
SIBLE

LENIN

The documents in the museum explain the life-and-death story behind this telegram. The food situation in Moscow and St. Petersburg was very serious when Stalin arrived in Tsaritsyn, June 6, 1918. The maps show that the food routes of old Russia converge at Tsaritsyn. The railways from the North Caucasus and other grain areas, and the Volga, bearer of supplies from the East and Southeast, meet there. A message from Lenin tells Stalin that the situation in the key cities of the revolution is worse. "No bread was distributed today in St. Petersburg or Moscow." Things are very bad. Stalin's reply is shown: there is lots of bread (Russians generally say "bread" when they are talking about bread grains) in the North Caucasus but the railway is blocked. An expedition has been sent and Stalin expects the line to be reopened in ten days. Meanwhile, he advises that meat and fish be given, "which we can send in quantity." In a week it will be better, he promises.

And so it was. The crisis was surmounted. The defense of Tsaritsyn saved the revolution which was threatened with starvation far from Tsaritsyn. This was, of course, not the last time Tsaritsyn, was threatened, and Stalin could not always be there. In May 1919 the Whites again menaced the city and the French mill found itself running out of fuel just when its

product was desperately needed by the armies defending it. It was the only southern source of metal for the Tenth Army. But Baku was held by the British, which cut off its oil supply. And no coal was available. What was to be done?

The workers held a meeting and decided to send a delegation to Moscow, where the government was now located, to ask for fuel. Gostushkin was elected to represent the workers and he was to be accompanied by a representative of the factory administration, the factory having been nationalized by this time. Nor was there much time; the enemy was at the gates of the city.

Gostushkin and his colleague could not, of course, simply buy a ticket and go to Moscow. All communications were catch-as-catch-can, depending upon the direction of warfare in the widespread fighting of the time. There were no passenger trains at all. So on May 25, 1919, they took a steamer up the Volga to Saratov. From there they beat their way on the railroad, by showing their credentials to the railway workers, from point to point for a whole week before they made it to the capital.

And now what? To say in Tsaritsyn, "Go to the government and ask for fuel," is easy. But when you arrive in Moscow, where a revolution has shattered the old administration and is now improvising a new one, you have no idea where to start. Gostushkin and his colleague discovered a fuel supply organization and headed hopefully that way. Needless to say, it didn't prove that simple. A desperately beset government guarded its scanty fuel supplies jealously. The fuel organization didn't even have the Tsaritsyn French Mill on its lists of Russian industrial establishments! Of course it couldn't give fuel to the representatives of a plant that didn't even exist as far as it knew! So the delegation decided to go to the Red Army. It succeeded in reaching Commissar of Communications Krassin, a very important Bolshevik, then in charge of supplies for the Red Army. Krassin said "No," and said it emphatically. But Gostushkin refused to give up. He led his colleague to the Military Commissariat, which likewise said, "We can't help you." The peo-

ple at the Military Commissariat, however, did take the trouble to put the delegates in a car and send them to the Kremlin, saying that the question would be put to the Council of Defense, the peak of the pyramid of Soviet wartime power.

All this had used up many days and it was now June 15, 1919. The delegates from the Tsaritsyn French Mill sat in the reception room two hours before a man came out and said: "You are refused; your question won't be decided here." He added that there was no need for them to stay any longer. The administration representative, an engineer, was discouraged and rose to go. But Gustushkin was not ready to take "No" for an answer. There was a reception clerk or secretary in the room, and he addressed her, asking if he could send a note to Lenin.

"Yes, of course," she replied.

He wrote: "Comrade Lenin, can I speak to you about the supply of fuel to the factory?"

The girl in the reception room took the note through a door and came back with a handwritten notation on Gustushkin's message: "Write the number of your phone. I'll call you." But Gostushkin was afraid to leave with so indefinite a perspective. So he wrote, quite truthfully moreover: "There's no phone where I'm staying. Please tell me what time you can see me."

This message, in its turn, went through the door and came back once more annotated in Lenin's hand: "At 4 p.m."

The delegates returned in the afternoon and found a hundred or so persons waiting in line to get into the reception room. The guard, however, let Gostushkin and his colleague in when he saw the note in Lenin's handwriting. The girl in the reception room took the note and brought out Fatayeva, Lenin's private secretary

"Vladimir Ilyich asks to be excused," she said. "He is very busy and wants me to ask you your business."

They told how they had knocked on all the doors in vain. She picked up a telephone. The Military Commissariat confirmed that the delegates had been there and that fuel had

been denied them. Fatayeva thereupon told Gostushkin and his colleague to come to a meeting of the Council of Labor and Defense on June 17 when the fuel question would be on the agenda. That is to say, not the next day but the day after. She also ordered the Kremlin commandant to give them passes that would admit them to the Kremlin for the meeting. The delegates went away and Gostushkin at once sent a telegram to the workers at the mill, urging them to get the Headquarters of the Tenth Army to wire the Council that the production of the mill was essential to the southern front.

He and his colleague returned to the Kremlin long before 8 p.m. on June 17, the scheduled hour of the meeting, because Gostushkin was hoping to see Lenin enter, but Lenin and the others had entered earlier and Lenin had, moreover, used a private elevator so that they wouldn't have seen him no matter how early they might have come. Gostushkin asked the girl in the reception room if a telegram had come from the Tenth Army, and she said, "Yes, three telegrams!" When he asked if his question was on the agenda, she said, "Yes, it's the thirty-second point." So he settled down for a long wait—and wasn't disappointed; it was long indeed. About 2:30 a.m. June 18, 1919, the girl said, "Get ready. Your question is coming up."

Gostushkin was so excited he was trembling as if chilled, despite the fact that he was wearing his military overcoat. The reception girl said, "Here, drink a little water and you'll be all right." He drank the water, but he wasn't all right. He was worse than before. He went in shaking like a leaf. But his stage-fright vanished the moment their business began.

The two-man delegation marched right up to Lenin and shook hands.

"Who are you?" Lenin asked. "I'm a worker," replied Gostushkin. "I'm an engineer," said the other.

"Well, tell us your trouble."

"They don't give us fuel and the mill can't work without it," Gostushkin replied.

Lenin turned to Krassin and said, "Why don't you give them

fuel. I have three telegrams from the Southern Army." Then turning to the delegation he asked: "How much do you need?"

They answered that the mill needed three thousand tons. Lenin turned back to the Council and asked, "Who is against it?" Krassin, red with anger, said: "I'm against it." But he was evidently prepared to temporize, for he suggested stopping the open-hearth furnace that had just been put in operation, and limiting the mill to departments giving armor plate. The point—though no one expressed it—was clear enough; the city was on the verge of falling and the Council did not want to deliver supplies to the enemy. Still, if the workers could supply armor plate to the defenders of Tsaritsyn up to the moment of its fall, the gain in time would be worth the expenditure of fuel. Lenin accepted Krassin's suggestion and asked the delegation how much fuel would they need if they closed the open-hearth furnace. They put it at half their original figure. Referring to the worsening of the military situation of Tsaritsyn in the weeks the delegation had been away, Lenin asked how the delegation expected to get fuel delivered. Gostushkin replied:

"We're used to working when the front is three to ten miles away. Now it's at Stereptova, thirty miles distant. We consider that a long way."

"Then it's not in artillery range?" Lenin asked, and Gostushkin replied, "No."

"All right," Lenin said, "you will get your 1500 tons and if it becomes necessary to put other departments into operation, come to Moscow and don't come to anybody but me."

The fuel would reach them by barge, and Lenin warned them that, in the event of retreat, these barges must neither fall into enemy hands nor be lost. He shook their hands, sent his greetings to the mill workers, and their business was finished. It was now 4 a.m., July 18, 1919. A little while later they received the document containing the official order for the fuel, and at once telegraphed it to Tsaritsyn.

Tsaritsyn fell two weeks later, July 1, 1919, but the fuel was neither lost nor wasted. The two weeks of production

under fire contributed to that process by which the Russian people ground down and wore out the interventionists and their native allies. At the time of the fall, moreover, the Soviet authorities took with them everything and everybody needed for the conduct of the life of Tsaritsyn when it should be recovered. Gostushkin, incidentally, was in charge of the evacuation. And on January 2, 1920, the Red Army recaptured Tsaritsyn never to lose it again.

Of the years that followed, the building of Stalingrad, its destruction and rebuilding, we have already heard a brief account. We need take only a minute to outline the alterations the revolution made in the daily life of these two old workers. Or, more exactly, of one of them. For of Gostushkin I know only that he has two living children and four grandchildren, is now in charge of the houses and apartment buildings owned by the mill, and, whereas he was barely literate at the time of his visit to Moscow, he learned in the Soviet era to appreciate books—and had time for them for the first time in his life. He also had a chance to rise in the mill, for the great expansion of Soviet industry made room for all the skilled workers obtainable. In the old days, he recalled, you might start as a fourth assistant smelter and spend your whole life in the mill without becoming a full smelter.

I know more about Dolgov because I ate his bread and his salt, listened to his phonograph records, fondled his infant granddaughter—and drank his vodka—while he told me the story of his life. But I will make only an outline: He continued to work in the rolling mill at an unskilled job in the cutting department until      From 1900 to 1902 he attended a special school set up for workers who wanted to qualify themselves for upgrading. (Such schools are found in every sphere of work in Russia under the name of Institute for Raising Qualifications.) As an old worker, he was given the consideration formerly reserved to the nobility. Teachers came to his home to help him. Once, when it was contemplated sending him to Germany on a mission—a mission that failed to materialize—he studied German at home for four hours daily over

a period of three months. In 1909, his application and the new circumstances gave him a chance at a job that never could have been his in the old days—he became superintendent of a shift.

Of the change in housing conditions for these veterans of the French mill, I have already spoken. The new apartments are in an area sometimes called the Metal-Workers District, which has swallowed up Big France and Little France and the Russian Village so that now only the old men remember those places and times. And yet, is it only the old people? Cherkassova has lived virtually her whole life in the time of the revolution. Still, she has seen the old and the new. It was the old kulak Russia that she worked in and for from her ninth year to her seventeenth. If from then on she carried heavy burdens willingly, it was not because life was easier and the revolution had brought better material conditions. No, it could hardly have done so; the fruits of the five-year plans were only beginning to ripen in the thirties, and life is still hard in Russia. What the revolution offered Cherkassova as she understood it, was a chance to create a better life by her own toil. She seized that chance. You might say, therefore, that Cherkassova, and still more the younger people who have known only Soviet life under the five-year plans, work as they do simply out of faith in the future. No doubt they have such a faith, but it would be poor reporting to let it go at that. For as you move about the Soviet Union and observe the limitless, restless building, the endless new construction, you realize that there is no person so young that his own life has not spanned great change. All are capable of comparing yesterday and today. And their living parents and grandparents can carry the comparison back for them to the utter darkness of Tsarist Russia, which was primitive and backward—this is worth some American thought—beyond anything the American people knew even in the days before they had a modern industry, yes, even before the American Revolution. Russian life up to 1917 was life of the Middle Ages. This is the yesterday with which they compare today!

## CHAPTER VI

# And a Schoolboy from Stalingrad

THERE IS more to it, though, than mere satisfaction with today because yesterday was so bad. The way people work in Stalingrad—as throughout the Soviet Union—doesn't suggest a desire or willingness to stop where they stand. Quite the contrary, they tell you plainly that they have built with their own hands something that did not exist in Russia yesterday and they know they will have something tomorrow that has never existed anywhere in the world. They know it, they say, because they themselves are building it today.

I want to introduce you to some of the people of Stalingrad who told me things like that. And to others who wouldn't think of putting it that way but who say it with actions. One of the latter is Anatole Pinyonzhek. His life story is not very long—he is only twenty-three. Nor is it dramatic, in the ordinary sense. But it has the merit of being a peculiarly Soviet story. He was born on the banks of the Dnieper River in the Ukraine. His father had formerly been a railway worker but learned accounting after the revolution. His mother graduated from Pedagogical School and in 1907 obtained a university degree by correspondence. She is now a teacher. In 1905, when Anatole was only eight and a grade-school beginner, they came to Stalingrad to live and work. The boy graduated from elementary school (seven-year school, it is called in Russia), in May 1941, and at that point had to choose between middle



school (three years beyond the elementary school) or work. It is a safe bet that his parents urged him to go on with his schooling, but work has a lot of prestige in the Soviet Union and Anatole had long made his decision to become a worker in the Stalingrad Tractor Factory.

A boy has a right to make such a decision in the Soviet Union and can choose his course not just in theory but in practice. Anatole went straight to the factory school maintained by the tractor plant. There he got food and lodging and a small wage while learning. And he knew just what he wanted to learn, for somehow this not very large 14-year-old boy had made up his mind he wanted to be a lathe-operator.

He did not get his chance to learn, because the following month the Nazis invaded the Soviet Union. Anatole was mobilized for defense construction work and farm work. As the enemy drew near to Stalingrad he worked in a brigade removing the valuables of the city to the other side of the Volga. When that was completed, he was taken east with his family in the organized evacuation of Stalingrad.

Immediately after the Battle of Stalingrad, in the summer his family returned to the city and he got a job at the tractor factory. He was what is called there a "distributing master," who parcels out the work to the various operators. But he made known his preference for the lathe and as soon as someone could be found to fill his job, he was given his chance. That was August and he was already able to operate the lathe because he had taken every opportunity to learn and to practice on his own time while working as a distributing master. And he is still working today on that same lathe.

What could be more commonplace, humdrum, monotonous? Anatole never thought so. I can't say that, privately, he conceived of his job as a great opportunity for adventure, but I can say he made it such an adventure in practice. And he thought of his job as no American worker I ever met thinks of his job. The attitude I am most familiar with is that a job is a necessary evil to be put out of one's mind the minute the

whistle signals the end of the working day. Anatole didn't feel that way at all. In fact his mind was not centered on the particular work he had to turn out on his lathe on a particular day. From the time he started work, his heart was set on conquering the lathe. Specifically, he wished to so master the instrument that he could run it at airplane speeds.

You may know even less about a lathe than I do, if that's possible. But I did learn enough to understand what Anatole wanted to do and what problems he faced. A lathe has a rapidly turning tool that cuts or drills or grinds or pares or shaves metal, including the hardest steels, until it has shaped a tool or a machine-part to that exact size and smoothness it must have in our precision-attuned technology. When the tool is working on the metal, even at customary speeds, the friction generates so much heat that the point of the tool is apt to melt. The point of the tool must therefore be a very hard substance that can stand a lot of heat. Industrial diamonds were once the indispensable material for this purpose, as I understand it. But in the last ten or twenty years special alloys have more and more displaced diamonds. In the United States the manufacture of such alloys, with constant development of new ones, is a highly specialized and rather important industry.

There was not, in the Soviet Union, and there is not in the United States, to my knowledge, any alloy hard enough to stand up to the punishment Anatole offered his lathe. It should be observed that no one had ever attempted to operate a lathe at airplane speeds and an operator had, first of all, to have enormous confidence in his technical skill to try to reach that goal. Anatole's confidence was no doubt put to the test and justified by various brief experiments in doing a job at unheard of speeds. The tests had to be brief because brief was the life of the tool put to that test. And so the question of a cutting edge or alloy was always the essence of his problem. The big trouble was that the metallurgists and chemists specializing in that field were not even doing any serious work on the problem because the problem existed only in Anatole's mind. He had a monopoly because nobody else in the Soviet Union had thought

of, or had taken seriously the thought of, operating a lathe at airplane speeds.

So Anatole set himself the job of creating the alloy he needed. I ought to put a lot of exclamation points after that sentence. This sixteen-year-old boy with a grade-school education coolly determined to create an alloy harder than any known to the world. He set himself to do something more than the highly organized steel industry of the United States, employing armies of top-rank scientists and technologists, had been able to do. But he apparently did not dramatize it to himself, and he certainly didn't dramatize it to me. "I had to have an alloy hard enough for the job," he said to me. Simply. Without exclamation points.

So he created such an alloy. Also simply. Also without dramatic emphasis. It was like pulling teeth to drag from him some kind of detail that would enable me to understand how he did it, how he could have done it. Oh, he got lots of help, he hastened to assure me. This I don't doubt. One thing you can see for certain in Russia is that if anybody says he would like to try to work out something that will speed production or cut costs or save materials, important people will fall on his neck and say, "Please, what do you need?" The engineers and technologists in the factory showed Anatole how to find just what he needed to study, and assisted him in every possible way.

The factory had a certain, limited experience in the matter. In the era it had done some research on the problem because the Soviet Union wanted to reduce the importation of expensive industrial diamonds. In the plant, and throughout the Soviet Union, research and experiment produced hard metals and their production became, in Russia as in the United States, an important industry. Moreover, in Soviet engineers developed methods of working on tempered steel at high speeds and these methods were in put into wide practice and became all but universal in Soviet technique during the war.

"My work," said Anatole, "was done on this foundation."

"But now the engineers and technologists come to him," a slim young man interjected at this point. We were in the office of Anatole's department chief. The chief, that same Nicholas Pavluk who told us how they had fished the lathes out of the river, came and went; various people came to see him and went right out or sat down and talked to him or waited for him. The slim young man was one of these people coming and going. He spoke in Russian, of course, and my interpreter translated it for me. A moment later, she said something that provoked me to the uncharitable comment: "You *would* reduce it to the trite."

"But I'm only interpreting," she protested.

And the slim young man added sharply, *in English*, "It's not trite, it's true."

I explained that however true a generalization might be, I had come to the Soviet Union for the facts behind the generalizations and not for the generalizations themselves. But I was really more interested in the fact that he spoke English than I was in the argument. So I asked about that. I learned that the slim young man was a metallurgist and had been required, like other specialists, to learn to read English so that he might study technical literature in the English language. For those who cannot read English, I gathered, everything of importance in American technical journals is eventually translated and was therefore available to Anatole.

"You know, of your own knowledge, then, that the alloy you created is harder than any known in the United States?" I asked. And the slim young man remained silent until Anatole had answered, "Yes," whereupon he confirmed that they were quite certain of this fact. In short, a problem that no bright young university graduate would ordinarily be trusted to tackle in the United States, had been undertaken—and solved—by a Russian boy with hardly the equivalent of grade-school education. The war having crowded into his life at an early age, he certainly had not previously had time to study the necessary science, yet here he had mastered a task involving plenty of science intricately integrated with practice (in a way

that makes it, to my thinking, a science more sure than the science of the isolated laboratory).

Having made the indispensable metal, Anatole was now able to put his skill as a lathe operator to the test of practice. With practice, he developed techniques for high-speed performance of all the varied work that comes to a lathe. As a result, he himself is now "working on" as the Soviet expression goes.

The expression touches such an important aspect of Soviet life that it's worth a brief halt for explanation. Every kind of job in every industry has a "norm." A worker this year, or according to the standards now prevailing in Soviet industry, is expected to do the stipulated norm or quota for his job for a given period of time. As piece-work rates are almost universal, self-interest and patriotism combine to induce the worker to exceed his norm, to produce not his minimum but his maximum. In addition to the resulting fat pay envelope, he wins great honor, even national honor if his contribution is great enough. Soviet newspapers and radio broadcasts are always full of stories of such achievements and the Russian language has acquired words and phrases reflecting the universal preoccupation with work. If by July 25 a worker has completed the amount of work his "norm" requires for that month, he keeps on going and says he is "working on August." When Cherkassova was telling me about her days on the early collective farms, she raised both arms, bent at the elbow, in a gesture that said: "I worked hard." But she did not say that; she said: "I fulfilled three or four norms." At a shipboard party among foreigners who had been living in Moscow, when one of our shipmates was drinking more than his quota, someone remarked: "He's working on 1902!" By May 1, Anatole had finished all the work required of him by his "norm" for the full period of the first postwar five-year plan, and the as yet unannounced second plan which would as a matter of course mean, and had piled up still more production at his lathe by his high-speed methods, so that he was now "working on" the latter part.

Anatole's skills and the alloy he developed were of potential

national significance. Turning the potential into the actual is another major Soviet preoccupation. You encounter the phrase, "to generalize experience," about as often as the ones connected with "norm." The phrase may have different meanings in different contexts, but here "generalizing" Anatole's "experience" seems to mean teaching other lathe-operators how to operate their lathes at airplane speeds now that a tool hard enough for the job is ready for their use. Some five hundred operators in the tractor plant alone have been so taught. By wide general publicity, by preparation of technical papers describing Anatole's techniques (or "methods," which is the common Soviet word for it), by visits of engineers and operators and factory executives to the tractor plant, Anatole's "experience" is "generalized," and the lathe-operators of the whole Soviet Union learn to operate their lathes at speeds heretofore unknown to the world of industry. And, of course, Soviet industry is producing Anatole's alloy in the quantities necessary to nationwide adoption of his "methods." That, too, is a part of "generalizing" his "experience."

With no one to support, Anatole earns from 1500 to 2000 rubles a month so that I would say he is in the relative buying-power position of an unmarried American worker who earns \$300 a week. And at 23 he is a nationally-honored citizen of his country. He is in the factory's Book of Honor, he has connections with the Moscow Institute of New Technology and corresponds with professors in such institutions as the Leningrad House of Technique and Machine-Building. He gets so many letters from scientific workers in the tractor industry and connected with machine-work in all parts of the Soviet Union, that the Stalingrad Tractor Factory's trade union committee has had to take the burden of correspondence and filing off his shoulders.

When we think of success in work, we think in terms of promotion, which implies that the job itself doesn't give enough spiritual or material satisfaction. The Soviet attitude is different. When I asked Anatole questions designed to inform me what his personal ambitions were, I couldn't help reflecting our

attitude by phrasing the questions in terms of what kind of work he would like to be promoted to. He looked blank. He had no intention of leaving his lathe, he said. Oh, maybe later, he added after a little thought, he will enter a technical school (an advanced vocational school) studying at night or by correspondence, without giving up his regular work. Now I think it rather likely that Anatole will rise in industry. The famous Stakhanov is, after all, or was when last I heard about him, manager of a big plant. But it is characteristically Soviet that Anatole feels no drive to give up his lathe for a "higher" kind of work. His work is in his blood and the way he does it one can understand that it has all the intellectual variety and gives all the spiritual satisfaction a man can ask of a job.

As I have said, Anatole doesn't dramatize himself. If he did, perhaps he would have thought to tell me that he, this nationally honored Soviet citizen who has not only developed technical skills valuable to his country but has solved scientific-technological problems of a high order, was scheduled to graduate from the tenth grade that very week! He was on vacation, a month's vacation, for the express purpose of studying for the examinations he would have to take on May 20. By passing the exams he would complete "middle school," roughly equivalent to junior high school in the United States. And that is the end of the story of Anatole, the schoolboy-scientist of Stalingrad

His is a story possible only in that very different society from ours, the Soviet Union. And it reflects that one big thing I learned in Russia, learned beyond the possibility of doubt: that no one in the Soviet Union is prepared for war adventures or is being prepared for them. The Russians are thinking only of work. The only thinking they do about the next war is to wonder if we are really going to let our preventive war maniacs start it. When Cabinet officers of the United States call openly for a "war of aggression" to force Russia to "cooperate for peace," the Russians are bound to think that it is we who threaten their peace. And they ask you (even the children in the orphanage asked me) why Americans in powerful places

were threatening war and why we, the American people who certainly don't want war, were doing nothing to "muzzle the warmongers." I never heard a Russian respond to these threats by saying, "We ought to get them before they get us." I talked to correspondents stationed in Russia for years, and none had ever heard of any responsible Soviet official publicly or privately sounding off that way. None had ever heard of even a private Soviet citizen making war talk. It simply isn't in the air!

That's the way it was when I was there and I have a striking confirmation that it remains that way. On September 7, the Moscow office of Associated Press sent a dispatch reporting Russian reaction to the shooting down, by American war-planes, of a Soviet bomber based on Port Arthur. The dispatch reported high feeling and resentment against the United States government and responsible "leaders." As printed in the *New York Times* of September 8, it added:

"In all this condemnation of the United States, one hears no criticism of the American people. The criticism is centered on such figures as President Truman, Secretary of State Dean Acheson, various military men, bankers, industrialists, and, of course, 'Wall Street.' The Russians appear to feel that the American people are being led to war.

"However, the Russian people still seem to believe that war is going to be averted somehow, some way, and certainly express hope that it will. Likewise, one does not hear the people talking about war being inevitable."

No, they don't hate us, they aren't being groomed to fight us, and they refuse to believe that there *has* to be war. Take Stalingraders. How could they want another war when the last hangs heavy on their souls? They don't talk much about it, but it is never forgotten. One of Cherkassova's children, for instance, whose young mind might be supposed to have lost the memory of that war she never mentions, recently startled her mother and teachers. On May 9—Soviet VE-Day—she was asked to write a composition about the Battle of Stalingrad. Her paper contained a thousand details one might have thought beyond



the grasp of the five-year-old she was when she experienced those things; in the seven years that have intervened, she had forgotten nothing.

Sometimes the last war is not that far away. The tractor factory sent Mrs. Anna Krasavtsova to show me around its hospitals, schools, maternity homes and other cultural facilities that belong to the factory and are for the free use of its employees. When we were in the hospital, she made a remark that caused me to think she had recently been ill. Later, however, in purely casual conversation with others, I learned that she had indeed been in the hospital, but only to be with her eleven-year-old boy. He and some of his friends had found an old bomb and were burning the powder in it (Stalingrad boys naturally know how to take apart bombs and shells) when an old lady stumbled across their path and was endangered by the blaze. The boys tried to meet this problem by instantly smothering the fire in sand; the result was an explosion. It did not harm the old lady, but two of the boys were killed and Mrs. Krasavtsova's son suffered a broken right arm and a left arm so badly injured that the hand had to be amputated. There were ten similar accidents in Stalingrad in the first four months.

In Stalingrad they know the bitterness of war—and how long it lasts. When they line up to put their signatures to the Stockholm peace petition, you will never convince me that they are engaged : a “propaganda trick.” They just mean they want peace.

Well, I have hardly touched the Stalingrad material in my notebook. Besides the stories of Stalingrad itself, there are all my notes about the farms on the steppe that I visited during my Stalingrad stay. So you can see that I have by no means finished telling you what I saw in Stalingrad. Nor will anything persuade me to leave all those stories forever buried in my notebook. But for the moment, only the moment, it is time to leave Stalingrad and go back to the beginning.

## PART II: IF YOU WERE STALIN

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### CHAPTER VII

## The Ruble and I

IN THE BEGINNING there was Mr. Vishinsky. But the beginning would also be the end as far as I was concerned. The Foreign Minister of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics could hardly be expected to take me by the hand and lead me around the Soviet Union. Nor could I find out whether anyone else would. I could not even learn, though I inquired earnestly at the Soviet Embassy, whether there definitely were rubles waiting for me in Moscow. I pictured myself washing dishes in the Kremlin for the rest of my life after running up a Moscow hotel bill far beyond my pocketbook. Well, there was nothing for it; I would have to start out as a plain tourist at a time and in a country where there are no plain tourists.

Accordingly, I went to the offices of the New York agent of Intourist, the official Soviet travel agency. There I purchased "tickets" entitling me to hotel accommodations and meals my first five days in the Soviet Union. After that, the Lord would have to provide. On February 18 I sailed for Europe aboard the Polish steamship *Batory*—of Gerhart Eisler fame—arriving at Gdynia, Poland, March 1. I took the night train to Warsaw and on March 7 boarded the Warsaw-Moscow plane, a Soviet-operated line that has its first halt at Minsk, White Russia, where immigration and customs formalities are completed. Around 7 p.m., Moscow time, the plane landed at the principal airport of the capital of the Soviet Union.

Sure enough, Mr. Vishinsky was not at the airport to meet me. Happily, however, Intourist maintains an office at the airport, so there was a logical place to start. The Intourist man was friendly but flabbergasted and judging from the number and length of his phone-calls, so were a lot of other minor officials in Moscow. Unheralded and unsponsored foreign visitors, particularly American ones, are something new under the sun. Nevertheless, in due course he procured a room in the Hotel National for me, and a car to take me there. Installed in a comfortable room, I had my first meal and confirmed my worst fears: if I ever had to pay in dollars I would get "dishpan hands" in the Kremlin.

The need for rubles forced me to face at once the larger problem: how was I to start work? If Mr. Vishinsky was not going to open doors for me, who would? We talk a vast deal of nonsense about Russia in the United States, but if we only knew our own country we would understand this problem in Russia without benefit of stale iron-curtain theories. The fact is that if you want to "see" Russia or the United States, someone has to open doors for you. Of course you can walk the streets of as many cities as you like, but that won't tell you anything meaningful about any country. To get into factories, for instance, you need help. In the United States, powerful private persons—owners or their representatives—open the doors, on occasion, to the "right" people for their own reasons. In the Soviet Union the factories are under public ownership so I knew the doors could only be opened by public officials.

Now where should I start? The only public official who knew me—or so I thought—was that same Mr. Vishinsky. So there was nothing for it but to telephone the Foreign Office. This I did, or rather, I had the Intourist Service Bureau do it for me. I did not ask for the Foreign Minister, however; I simply asked that someone in the American division, someone who could advise me, be put on the telephone. A connection was made, and, to my surprise, I was greeted cordially and welcomed to Moscow by a minor official who evidently *did* know me. He identified himself and I recalled that we had met

at Lake Success in 1947 when I was covering the United Nations and he was a press officer with the Soviet delegation then headed by Andrei Gromyko. Well, that brightened things up!

I had a pleasant visit with this rediscovered friend, and told him what I wanted: 1. contact with the publisher of my book, or, to be gross about it, rubles; 2. travel facilities, beginning with an interpreter. He promised to do something about these requests, and it was evidently up to me to sit back and wait now, until events could take their course. Several nervous days passed, however, and I got fidgety. I had the Service Bureau telephone one of the editors of *Pravda* (correspondents had suggested that they'd probably be happy to talk to me, as newspapermen interested in America; they knew me through my book and through an earlier pamphlet on the press which they had also reviewed). I was invited to *Pravda* and had a pleasant chat with a group of editors including Foreign Editor Viktorov (who had done the review on my book) and David Zaslavsky, whose biting articles are pretty well known to American specialists in foreign affairs. I put it boldly to them that they were not without influence and I was in no position to wait weeks for something to happen. They promised to find out what could be done.

Now it is possible that things would have begun to happen anyhow. I had arrived on March 7 and everything was in a mess because Sunday, March 12, was Election Day. Once elections were out of the way (everyone told me that), people would have more time for me. However that may be, it was Monday, March 13 that I visited *Pravda*, and the very next morning a young man appeared and offered a strange gambit: "I'm Nicky. Probably we shall go?" Probably he knew who he was and where we should probably go and why, but he certainly wouldn't tell me. So we got in a waiting car and probably went. The place we got to turned out to be the Writers Union and the man we talked to, Michael Apletin, head of its foreign division.

Mr. Apletin was, it developed, to be my door-opener in the Soviet Union. We discussed my problems, one of which was

evidently going to be Nicky, for Nicky, Apletin informed me, was my interpreter. I promised to submit a memorandum outlining what I wanted to do in the Soviet Union, and Mr. Apletin, in turn, outlined a program of activities in Moscow pending a decision on the larger plan. The Writers Union, he said, would also help me reach my publisher, or to put it more pithily, my rubles.

In due course, Nicky was sent for by the publisher and I received approximately 9,500 rubles less about 1,000 rubles income tax on the payment. At the newly announced four rubles to one dollar rate, this was a substantial payment for a mere translation, corresponding to a well known fact—that writers are better paid in the Soviet Union than anywhere else on earth. Unfortunately, my hotel bills were also substantial. So substantial that it was at once evident the royalties I had collected would not see me through my program. I offered my second book for publication in translation, and it was duly submitted by the Writers Union to the publisher. But I knew a decision on a book takes a lot of time. I might as well face it: I never was going to see a clear road ahead of me. Perhaps I would go as far as I planned, and never have to wash dishes to pay my way; but I never would be free of preoccupation with the problem of payment. I was, in short, going to have to work my way across the U.S.S.R.

In the meantime, I made it my business to see Moscow. And I saw a lot of it. Before the Writers Union finally found a suitable interpreter, able and willing to accompany me on distant journeys, and before we had come to agreement on a program beginning with Stalingrad, two months had slipped away. And so had most of my rubles! My hotel bills ran from seven hundred to a thousand rubles a week, and at that rate I would be broke in ten weeks. Well ahead of bankruptcy, therefore, I suggested to the Writers Union that some Soviet publication might like to have some articles by an American writer writing about America. In due course, the *Literary Gazette*, the influential twice-a-week newspaper of the Writers Union itself, picked up my offer and invited me to do three

articles. The *Gazette* is not a literary paper in any narrow sense; it has a general circulation and, like other major papers is also posted on wall-boards all over the city so that he who runs may read. I wrote whacking big pieces, because the Russians don't in the least mind running one article three full columns despite the fact that their papers have only four pages. And what I talked about in terms of homely little things in the United States, were those fundamentals I was dying to know about Russia. When the first article appeared and I had been paid for it, I could estimate that the three articles would bring me about four thousand rubles, or, in my tourist arithmetic, one trip to Stalingrad.

When I got back from Stalingrad, ready to depart without a day's delay for the Caucasus, a lucky break gave me the monetary margin of security I needed. *Pravda* called up the Writers Union and asked if they would ask me whether or not I would be willing to write an article for their International Children's Day issue, June 1. That meant I would have to do it that same afternoon I got the message, for I was taking the early morning plane to Tiflis. I wrote a small piece, but *Pravda* pays better than any paper in Russia, so it came to another fourteen hundred rubles and, with my balance on hand, saw me through my Georgian journey.

Something always happened just in time to save me from those dirty dishes. Upon my return to Moscow from Tiflis, I did my sums and reported to the Writers Union that I wouldn't have money enough to get safely through to July 1, when I was counting on sailing from Leningrad. Another bid was dug up, this time for an article in a weekly or bi-weekly newspaper called *Soviet Art*. A big article brought only nine hundred rubles, not enough to rescue me, but by that time it didn't matter. For just the day after I turned in the article, the publisher finally announced that he had decided to publish my second book in Russian translation and was ready to pay me for it. He paid—a small fortune. It came to almost sixteen thousand rubles even after deduction of income tax, and as it was too late to try to persuade the Writers Union to arrange further

journeys for me—and I felt I had something to write now in any event—I simply wallowed in wealth. The rubles being neither exchangeable nor otherwise useful to me, I set aside what I needed for my passage to London on the Soviet line from Leningrad, as well as for my living costs until July 1, and then went out and bought gifts with a clear conscience. That still left me with money to throw away—and I more or less did just that. It was a kind of ironic success story: I had come to Russia a poor boy, and now, only a few months later, I was leaving ruble-rich. The only trouble was, as the saying goes, that you can't take it with you.

## CHAPTER VIII

# Moscow Days

WHAT DID I do in Moscow? Easily answered: I worked. In Moscow, in Stalingrad, in Tiflis, the one thing I insisted on was work. If you are going to be in a country a limited time, and probably won't ever see it again, you don't feel like wasting a moment. My idea of a profitable—profitable, not pleasurable—use of my time, was to have something definite on my program every morning, still another thing each afternoon, and a third event every night. I did constant battle with the Writers Union to assist me in approximating this goal. If you note that I also constantly foot-toured the city, spent every available minute with Russian friends to get those little homely details of ordinary life that you miss in formal programs, consumed many hours in slow digesting of newspapers with the aid of an interpreter, and that I had to try each day to get my crude handwritten notes transcribed before the unwritten details had slipped my memory, you will agree that I was not idle.

My first job was to see Moscow. I had seen it, had a fleeting glimpse of it, once before. That was when I spent a little over a week in Russia—three days in Leningrad and six in Moscow. Even the view from my hotel window was enough to mark the amazing transformation the city had undergone. Room 207 of the Hotel National looked out on an immense open “square”—a rectangle about four blocks long and a block



wide—called the Manyezh, and across the Manyezh down a street between the Kremlin walls and an old red brick building, the Historical Museum, to Red Square. There I could see the clock-tower over the main or Spassky gate of the Kremlin, bizarre pineapple-domed St. Basil's Cathedral, and Lenin's tomb—and rising unplannedly above the severe, modern tomb, five faraway smokestacks intruded into the picture. At my left, the left end of the Manyezh, stood the new, modern Moscow Hotel which had not been there in. Under the hotel was a subway station whose name, Game Row, indicates what *was* here only a few years ago: a little square with a market where hunters sold their bag. Even in the thirties a little house stood here, and a Russian repatriate, forty-five years old, told me that when he was eleven there was a gate with an icon at the street beside the present Moscow Hotel and it had to be lifted to let you through. Moscow was a cow-town.

But now the city has been so refashioned that it is surely going to become one of the world's greatest. It has been given great wide main streets and avenues and an abundance of open squares so big that there is a net effect of spaciousness beyond any city I ever saw. The Museum of the Reconstruction of Moscow has an electrically-operated model of the moving job Moscow did to save some fifty important buildings when they ruthlessly ripped up the narrow-streeted city to make the present open boulevards and squares. The massive brick Mossoviet (Municipal Building), which surely must be far, far, heavier than any building ever moved in the United States, was one of the buildings preserved. The complicated moving-mechanism is designed to do its job without disturbing the occupants of the buildings! Friends told me that an American-style publicity job was done during the moving. Radio reporters took microphones into the building and interviewed tenants to demonstrate that normal life continued throughout the job. An eye-ear hospital was turned ninety degrees and moved back some hundred yards while surgery continued in the operating room!

Almost all the old trams, out of which crowds hung peril-

ously by one another's shoestrings, have disappeared entirely and the few that remain are relegated to the outskirts. They have been replaced by modern trams whose doors must be closed and steps lifted before the starter will work, and by slick all-metal trolley-buses—with women driving many of these conveyances. There are thousands of slick sedans operating as taxis, too, but, as in New York, the big thing is the subway, only, as you know, Moscow's is a clean subway with fabulously beautiful stations. A new line had opened just as I arrived and I visited it and found its stations still more lovely than those of the earlier routes; just as I left, still another line was due to begin service. The subways are equipped with scores of the longest streamlined escalators I have ever seen and the do-and-don't signs overhead tell you to stand to the right because Muscovites, like New Yorkers, are always rushing and have no patience to let the escalators do their climbing for them.

The barrenness from which a great city is apt to suffer has been relieved by the planting of thousands of trees everywhere you turn in Moscow. They do not plant seedlings but trees of many years' growth so that immediately after planting the city turns into a park. "The green look" is one of the current Soviet passions. Not only urban centers but villages are planting madly and this is connected with the great tree-growing program that is part of the Stalin fifteen-year conservation-reclamation-afforestation-irrigation scheme. During my first two months in Moscow a park was begun and completed right in the center of town, facing the opera house (the *Bolshoy Theatre*). Again, one spring day I saw workmen digging pot-holes along part of the Sadovaya, one of those new broadened boulevards forming part of a Paris-like circular system. Two or three days later I passed again and now the boulevard was already tree-planted along its whole length.

And amid all this mechanization and modernization stand many reminders that the Socialist city has been hewn out of the pre-medieval forest-capital that was ancient Muscovy. There are hundreds of log cabins and quite a few shacks, some of them carelessly standing right in front of a block of ultra-

modern apartment houses on the fashionable and newly-widened Leningrad Chaussée, as if they were construction shacks the workmen had forgot to remove. It is a reminder that the job is not just to build more facilities but to revamp an 800-year-old city. They work at it day and night; just as

you cannot move without bumping into new construction. I went to an exhibition of building techniques; its main function is to pass along to everyone connected with construction, every new idea as rapidly as it pops up on any one job. Here I saw models and got details of the eight new skyscrapers under construction in Moscow (but Russians never, never would call them that; they call them "multi-storeyed buildings.") I visited the seven which were already under construction, ranging from sixteen to thirty-two stories and never grouped but scattered all over the city, each a local architectural center. The proudest is the immense new Moscow University in the suburbs, its 26-storey central portion 600-feet high, its many buildings providing 6,000 rooms for students' living quarters and other housing for teachers on its 380 acres of grounds. Before I left Moscow, I saw scores of cranes at work on this project. Plans had also been drawn or work begun on 22 other "multi-storeyed" (ten- to fourteen-storey) apartment buildings, while ground was being cleared for still more such skyscrapers-but-let's-not-call-them-that. And yet the housing situation is as difficult as ever though this was a good year to see how much is being done to ease life now that the interruption of war and reconstruction is over. For one thing gas is right now being supplied to thousand of Moscow homes for the first time, gas brought by pipeline from faraway Saratov.

Moscow was on a buying spree when I got there. Just a few days earlier a cut in all prices had been announced, the third since the end of the war, and the always busy stores were packed to the show-windows. Before opening time—11 a.m.—long lines formed and the milkmen were in evidence to prevent traffic-blocking. At night Neon signs compete with the red stars over the Kremlin. The food stores bulge with food, but everything else is harder to get enough of. You have

to learn how to shop in Moscow. When I needed typewriter paper, I went to small and medium-sized stores in midtown, then to all the department stores, and finally a Muscovite told me there is just one store in the whole capital, a medium-sized place on the Arbat, not in the city's center, where you can always find most of the things you want in that line. A curious thing, to me, is the number of small stores. Although almost all shops are now state-owned, apparently very little has been done to reduce the number and increase the size of outlets. You'd think the Soviet Union, of all places, would go in for large, efficient retailing units. If it hasn't, it's probably for the same reason there's no phone book in Moscow: there's just too much to do and many important things have to wait.

In my first two months—two months and two days if you want to be stubborn—I saw the city decorated and on holiday three times. Sunday, March 12, was Election Day, elections to the Supreme Soviet. It was cold, raw, bitter. A kind of street fair was set up in the fitful wind that swept the Manyezh. Then in the afternoon it began to snow and sleet, and this continued until the next day. Through it all, with the street vendors literally dancing to keep warm, people bought not only hot dogs, candy, and wine, but—ice cream! They ate it, too, right there in the street, as they did all winter. A stage had been erected at the far end of the Manyezh and at night performers did their acts bare-headed and in shirt sleeves, without regard to the weather. Great searchlights played on the square and, later, dance-music was supplied by sound-trucks and there was dancing in the sleety street until early morning.

- For the eve of May 1—second only to November 7 in the hierarchy of holidays—the main buildings of the city were trimmed with lights like a Christmas tree and the night display—the illuminations, they call it—drew all Moscow into the streets. The May Day march itself I witnessed partly from the diplomatic grandstand on Red Square and partly, for variety, from my hotel window. It is divided into two parts, first, the military demonstration which is called “the parade,” then the civilian parade, which is called “the demonstration.” The military part,

with new jet planes as the feature, made the point the Russians want to make: that they are ready to defend themselves. But the proportions of the military and civilian demonstrations made another point: that whatever the war dangers in the world today, the overwhelming concentration of Russian energies is on peaceful construction. For the parade took just under an hour while the march of the people took all day. The march was more colorful from my hotel window, where I could see the gay pennants and the many lines merging to enter the Red Square, than it was in the Square itself. For unlike similar May Day marches in cities of the capitalist world, it is completely unmilitary. The people do not march in ranks and columns; it is simply one mass the whole breadth of the huge Red Square, children perched atop their papas' shoulders and proudly shown off to Stalin and the Politburo, the while, just as in Central Park on a Sunday, they forget to hold on to their balloons so that your eye is constantly distracted by blue, green, red gas-filled bubbles escaping into the sky. Of course we foreigners in the stand were not one whit less anxious than the Russians to catch a glimpse of Stalin as he mounted the steps of the tomb from which he reviews the whole show.

The last festival I witnessed before making my first long trip out of Moscow—the very night before my departure, in fact—was the celebration of V-E Day, which is May 9. It is marked principally by artillery salutes and fireworks displays at various points of the city. The big display is over the Kremlin and above it, high above it, there is also a huge and brilliantly-lighted portrait of Stalin, held up by balloons invisible in the dark sky.

How can I tell you all the things I saw and did in Moscow. It would, quite literally, take a larger book than this for Moscow alone. The best I can do is to crowd into a few paragraphs the bare entries in my calendar, taking care to omit everything I have already referred to directly or indirectly, and cutting comment to the bone. My sightseeing in the strict sense began with a regularly scheduled automobile tour, a tour in a plushy Soviet-made Zis limousine with chauffeur, guide and inter-

preter. The only trouble was that it was snowing, sleeting and drizzling simultaneously, so that the visibility wasn't. Why we didn't cancel the tour, no one will ever know!

It didn't matter. I saw a lot of Moscow after that. I visited the Tretyakoy Gallery with its all-Russian collection of paintings, the Historical Museum, the Lenin Museum, the Fine Arts Museum temporarily given over in its entirety to a display of gifts received by Premier Stalin for his seventieth birthday—gifts and hundreds of volumes containing individual greetings from millions of people all over the world—and to the Donskoye Monastery which is also a museum now, and to the Polytechnical Museum where I first saw Soviet television.

Excellent programs are available, by the way, on Soviet television, including all the best things on Moscow's "Broadway." A French correspondent who has been a dozen years or so in Russia, told me that there was television before the war; he remembers that employes of the Grand Hotel had two sets for their own use in off-hours. Sets made now have a smallish screen, but the Radio Ministry claims that the Soviet television picture is sharper than the American or any other because more lines are broadcast, the Ministry says, per square inch.

Then there are the eating places. I like national restaurants but somehow never got around to an Uzbek restaurant in Moscow. I ate, one time or another, in a Georgian restaurant where a Russian client roundly berated the Georgian string-orchestra for *playing* a Russian piece that should have been *sung*, and an Armenian restaurant that opened just before I left Moscow; I ate in hotels where a jazz band spoiled my dinner and a kind of crooner whined the hit tune from the moving picture, *Kuban Cossacks*, but the young, out-for-a-good-time crowd, danced happily to it and lapped it up even as in the good old U.S.A. I ate in the restaurant at the river station where the boats come in from the Volga via the new Moscow Canal, and at an airport restaurant where the planes came in and went out so noisily we couldn't keep a conversation going. I sat for hours waiting for my dinner in the restaurant of the Hotel National and I ate in the Moscow Automat where very

little is automatic and you get into line to buy tickets from the cashier for the items you have selected and then get back into line at the counter to find out they are just out of that.

My mind wasn't always on my stomach. I went to midnight mass that ushered in Easter at the principal Orthodox cathedral, through streets jammed with thousands of curiosity-seekers and worshippers, and on another occasion saw people in line to purchase Matzoth, the unleavened bread of the Jewish Passover. I went through the plant of *Pravda* and toured the Lenin Library with its thirteen million volumes. I relaxed in the Park of Culture and Rest with its huge open air summer theatre, its movie house and amusements and boating and chess exhibitions.

And speaking of chess, a major popular sport in the Soviet Union, I played occasionally with players of the "third category" and of the "first category;" I followed the progress of the Soviet team that won an international tourney in Budapest while I was there, and listened to the laments of a chess widow. I investigated and found there was nothing to a story I had heard about the Russians adding a couple of pieces to make the game more complicated. The collective farm championship and the women's all-Soviet chess championship were played, also, in those months, and so was the all-Soviet checker championship.

While we are on sports, one Spring Sunday I saw the annual relay race sponsored by the newspaper, *Evening Moscow*, run on the boulevard ring that circles the heart of the capital, with 22 teams, each with twenty men and ten women runners, who did the fifteen kilometers (nine to ten miles) in the record time, for the event, of 37: 52: 2.

The Russians play volley-ball and basketball, too, but the sport of sports in the Soviet Union is *futbol*, which we call soccer. I saw the opening game of the season in Moscow, May 2, between the city's two big league teams, *Dynamo* and *Torpedo*, and learned how seriously the Russians take their *futbol*. In Russia there are no "fans;" they are called, and they call themselves, "sufferers!" "Whom do you suffer for?" is the

usual form of the question. And the common answer is: "I am ill for *Dynamo*!" Because everything in Russia is first and foremost for the working people, the game doesn't start until the factory whistles blow, so it is sometimes pretty dark when it ends.

I visited the Kremlin, that is the several cathedrals, armory-museum and the building now used for the sessions of the Supreme Soviet. It was a bright sunshiny day, and as I walked up from the Kremlin gate with an attendant and the woman who was to guide us, I wondered what deep, heavy subject they were discussing, and I asked my interpreter and she whispered: "The guide says she hopes this weather holds out because she'd like to go fishing." And I returned, almost my last days in Moscow, to the Kremlin to attend the June sessions of the Supreme Soviet, where I saw work stopped for a rising ovation at every single mention of Stalin's name until Stalin and Malenkov (who were themselves engaged in open horse-play, passing along jokes to the young coming men of the Politburo, Suslov and Ponomarenko) stopped it by refusing to rise.

As I walked the streets I stopped to decipher the posters directed against American imperialism and, with my interpreter, studied the "want ads" posted in wall cases all over Moscow, some on printed cards, some mimeographed and some handwritten—for the jobs cry for the men in Russia. I went to a press conference staged by an international students' organization after a several-days meeting, and I went to a District People's Court where the top officers of a state-owned shop for making hand-painted scarves and ties were on trial for doctoring their books.

These People's Courts, by the way, have three judges and no jury, but when you look a little closer you find that this is really a variation on the jury system. For two of the judges are People's Assessors. Each pair of them serves ten days and another pair takes their place. When the judges are elected, enough of these People's Assessors are also elected to see the court through the year's business. In effect, then, there is a



judge and a jury of two, with this difference—that the jurors are elected, not selected, and have every right and power possessed by the judge. Being two, they can outvote him, so that the jury, the most democratic thing in a court, is more powerful than the judge in the Soviet Union.

Now do you suppose that I have completed a fair summary of what I saw and did in Moscow? Far from it! Thus far I have merely listed—not told you about, but listed—what may be called the sights I saw. That part might almost be put under the head of relaxation. My work, if it is possible to make such a distinction where everything had to be watched sharply for useful angles and where I had to take notes on everything, was quite distinct from my sightseeing. It can be put under two easy heads: schools and factories. By schools I mean everything that has to do with children, their raising, education, outlook and interests. By factories, I mean production and workers, working conditions and the way the worker looks at his work.

And does this end it? Not at all. I said my work came under two heads, but I forgot that I went to the theatre practically every night. By theatre I mean legitimate theatre, opera, ballet, children's theatre, puppet theatre, the circus, concerts of music and what the Russians call a "mixed" concert, which is not a concert but a program of variety which may be like vaudeville or may be a cultural evening—recitations of classic poetry, scenes from current plays, operas, ballets, with the casts straight from the theatre but not in costume or makeup—or maybe a reckless mixture of the lowest- and highest-brow stuff. (There is a guild of performers who specialize in this field and are, accordingly available for all kinds of entertainment needs.) And I haven't even mentioned movies and the interviews and visits pertinent to a study of the theatre in all its phases. It all belongs here, even if you don't think it's work to go to the theatre practically every night for four months and sometimes day and night. Especially when it's always and forever in a foreign language!

## CHAPTER IX

### Book Wanted

"OF MAKING many books there is no end"—but I was not out to end the making of books. My problem was to begin one. Where? How? What should I do and see? I hadn't the faintest idea. It's all very well to jot down briskly on your application for a visa, as I had done: "I would like to go to Russia to gather material for a book." But it's another thing to have to start actual work in Moscow with no knowledge of the Russian language, a vast ignorance of Russian history, politics and people, and no shadow of a program of action.

For stop and consider. Suppose you were a Russian coming to the United States on a similar errand. Or better still, suppose it were in America that we were looking for a book. There we would have no language handicap and no barrenness of background. Yet if we spent six months just knocking about the country, without a plan, is there any reason to suppose that what we saw would be worth reporting to the American people? Then why should we think we could "find a book" by aimless wandering in Russia, which is more than twice the size of the United States, under the various handicaps of language and general unfamiliarity with our subject? No, I knew it couldn't be done that way. I knew I could easily pass six months giving myself up to random provocations in the Soviet Union that would add up to nothing but disjointed fragments of experience.

I had a long talk in Moscow with Nikolai N. Mikhailov, a former teacher of economic geography who turned writer, about this problem. We talked first about his recent book, *Across the Map of the U.S.S.R.* that had been awarded the coveted Stalin prize. I found it full of tantalizing leads. There

are the new villages now being established in Armenia entirely populated by returned-from-America Armenians. There were the geysers like those in our Yellowstone Park, the first known Soviet geysers, recently discovered in Kronotakoye Reservation on the Kamchatka Peninsula, God knows how many thousands of miles away. There was the little settlement, who knows where, that once bore the name Village of Darkness but had now been overtaken by modern industry and electricity and had petitioned to have its name changed to Village of Light! There was the huge Rybinsk Sea, a man-made lake that had completely altered the life of an immense area and population, and was now the scene of much sailing and commercial fishing. There was the town of October (Oktyabrsky) whose main street is called Devonian Street because long ago a member of the Soviet Academy of Science predicted that oil could be found in older layers of the earth than any that had yet been discovered to contain petroleum. He said there ought to be oil, even in the ancient stratum known to geologists as the Devonian layer, and because the Russians believe in science they kept on looking for oil where science said it could be found, and they were still drilling and when the Nazis were on the lower Volga within easy striking distance of them, and they found the oil that theory had predicted, and among the oil towns that mushroomed up was the town of Oktyabrsky as wild and rude, in many ways, as the boom towns of the American West that figure in Bret Harte's stories, but there must be something different about the Soviet buckaroos because they did not think up picturesque names like Dead Man's Gulch but celebrated the victory of science by calling their main drag Devonian Street. The book suggested big subjects to explore: whole races of men like the Kirghiz who had not even an alphabet before and now are a cultured nation;

whole continents like Kazakhstan once populated solely by nomad shepherds and now turned into a great and varied industrial republic with populous modern cities where not a stone stood before. And little teasers: the Russians raise commercially (in Uzbekistan) the United States pecan, "most nutritious and oily of nuts," but they also raise the Kazanlyk rose whose perfume-sought oil is worth about ten thousand rubles a pound. And wouldn't you like to see the Taimyr Peninsula where the last blank space on the Soviet map was filled in only a year or two ago?

Yes, in that way we could beyond a doubt get a certain kind of book very suited to the United States book-market, a book about the unusual things in the Soviet Union. The trouble is, as Mikhailov pointed out, we could hardly accomplish in a few months what it had taken him a lifetime of study punctuated with travel, to accumulate. We would have to reduce the number of places we must go and the number of things we must do to the mere handful that could be accomplished in a few months. And if our book were to encompass only a very few things, it could no longer get by as a comprehensive catalogue of the unusual. Quality would have to replace quantity; it would have to depend on the importance and truth of what it had to say about Russia rather than on the odd character of its material.

In any event, we would want the book to say something. I could tell you quite a long story of what it means to publish in our country today a book that does not conform to the "official" line behind our foreign policy. Knowing what you have to go through to get such a book to a few thousand readers, you wouldn't undertake it unless you believed in the book with all your heart. You wouldn't face that ordeal unless you had something to say. Of course we have even more reason to feel that way now: this may be the last opportunity for many, many years to publish a sane book about the Soviet Union, if it is not already too late. That is why I attached so much importance to the search for a theme, a subject, a unifying idea that would tell me what to look for in Russia and

would then weld my scattered observations and experiences into one natural context. In short, the search for a book.

But the subject always eluded me. I realize now that I couldn't find what I was looking for because I was looking for the wrong thing. Under the influence of American journalistic standards, I was looking for sensations. I don't mean that I was foolish enough to believe the kind of stuff that, as a newspaperman, I had seen manufactured out of whole cloth. But I was so conditioned by the very nature of our journalism that I couldn't think of a book about Russia except in terms of the formula: man bites dog.

Soviet man simply refused to bite dog for me. I looked in the newspapers, but day after day they reflected only the Russian preoccupation with building, with increasing the volume and efficiency of production and getting all the jobs done that go along with those aims. This is the kind of story I found: a fishing collective in the Arctic has passed the million-rubles-a-year level of operation. That's the whole story and it occurs again and again, for the rise of "millionaire collectives" tickles the Russian funnybone. Another story: in a given region thus and so many farms, individual homes and settlements have just been electrified. Period. Day after day, paper after paper, there is nothing but that.

Nor would the individuals I talked to or interviewed help me. Maybe they wanted to, but the Russians simply can't understand our pursuit of the sensational. Their minds are on their work and they just don't "get" us. For instance, when I interviewed the head of the Academy of Agricultural Sciences, Trofim Lysenko, I found him utterly impatient of my questions. Yet they were the questions Americans ask about the famous genetics controversy. The Russians call it "the discussion on biology," while the American press never calls it anything but a "purge." "Discussion" may be a pretty euphemistic term for a great policy fight that lasted many years, but "purge" is the typically American sensationalist approach that reduces the whole thing to a conflict of personalities and leaves no room for the question of principle in the battle.

Of course there is such a thing as personality and what I saw of Lysenko's I didn't like. He, in turn, opened the interview by announcing that he didn't like journalists, American *or* Soviet. But when that's been said, it must be admitted that Lysenko was willing to give me as much time as I wanted to go into the scientific issues themselves and into the agro-biological consequences of the controversy. We can hardly blame him for being pointedly disinterested in the things you need for a book aimed at the American "market."

In any case, Lysenko's personality wouldn't explain similar experiences I had in interviewing people of dissimilar manner and character. At the Economics Institute, the official I interviewed was pleasant, twinkling-eyed and chatty. Yet he was just as unable as Lysenko to attach importance to the stuff that interests our newspapers. I had asked him about Eugene Varga, the Hungarian-born economist who was at the center of a major Soviet controversy in his field, and was duly labelled "purged" in the American press. Among the explanations frequently seen in our papers, was that Soviet policy since the war had been based on miscalculations of an American crisis and that Varga was the man responsible for some or all of the false predictions. Now how could a serious economist discuss this seriously when, as he patiently explained: 1. the very newspaper stories that talk of Varga's "purge" tell of various important jobs he continued to hold; 2. no Soviet economist ever attempts to predict a crisis at a certain time; 3. Soviet foreign policy could not, therefore, be based on such non-existent predictions; 4. and, finally, as responsible as is the Economics Institute, neither the Institute as such, nor Varga in his own right, works for the Foreign Ministry. The latter has its own economists.

The Russians, not being nervously preoccupied with the United States, as we are tensely preoccupied with the Soviet Union, cannot understand an approach based on determined ignorance of the facts of Soviet life. And perhaps their inability to understand saves them a deal of breath. For what is the use of refuting each new story that emerges from a total miscon-

ception and misrepresentation of Soviet life, if the misconception and misrepresentation will themselves remain? Whether that is their thinking or not, it is certain that the Russians are not interested in our stories about them, not even interested enough to refute them.

What the Russians *are* interested in, is not sensational and not hard to find out. It's production. More production. More efficient production. The papers are full of it and it is the purpose running all through Soviet life as anyone who goes there is bound to see. I visited a bread factory and a candy factory in Moscow; bread or chocolates, the whole thing is organized to get more of it to the Soviet people with fewer man-hours of work and with less backbreaking labor. Every kind of inducement of money and honor is held out to the worker who is not just a pacemaker but lends his heart and brain to the solution of the bigger problems of production. In the Red October Candy Factory, for instance, as in every place of toil in the Soviet Union, there are bonuses and honors for "Stakhanovites"—workers who produce far above their quotas. Certain little candy kisses were being hand-wrapped, and among the girls and women doing the wrapping some did and some didn't have little red flags standing before them. The flags represented above-quota work yesterday. Now it seemed to me that this was dull work no matter how you look at it, and I wondered if peppering up workers at boring jobs was all there was to "Stakanovism," which is always represented in our papers as nothing but "speed-up." So I went to another factory to find out.

It was the Paris Commune Shoe Factory, and in that factory there was a simple worker, a girl named Lydia Karabelnikova whose name and picture were in the newspapers practically every day. I talked to her and to others in the factory, a factory in no way remarkable so far as my limited knowledge of manufacturing goes, and learned just what she had done that Russians find so exciting. She had got her group or brigade to eliminate certain kinds of sloppy work that accounted for a great deal of material wastage. Then, one day a month or one

day a week, depending on how much they saved, they would work a whole day making shoes out of these "economized" materials. That stunt caught on. Soon the whole factory was doing it. One or more days a month the supply rooms would shut down entirely and the whole factory would make as many shoes as on any other working day—or even more—but without using an ounce of leather! Which is to say, as far as the factory was concerned, they used no leather or thread or any other material, for they made the shoes out of materials already issued to them and supposedly used up in earlier production. As these things go in the Soviet Union, with the help of skillful publicizing of Lydia Karabelnikova's feat, the idea had become a movement and in every factory of every kind in every part of the U.S.S.R., the aim of life had become—to "economize."

This is an evident and easily understandable device to raise the efficiency of industry in the Soviet Union where industry is so young. They make the same use of every holiday. For May 1st, for Election Day, for November 7th, for the birthday of an individual plant, a celebration is planned well ahead and the central point of the celebration is to reach a higher-than-ever production-target by that date. And yet, this doesn't dispose of Lydia Karabelnikova. There is something peculiarly Soviet, something new and different about these movements that raise the level of industry. They are *voluntary* and they are *movements*. That's what's different. If you talk to Lydia Karabelnikova or any of the Stakhanovites and brigade leaders in any of the factories, you'll know it's not a put-up job. I have no doubt that the Communist Party skillfully organizes the spread of these movements. Indeed, the "generalization" or spread of good ideas, is something the papers are always urging. But there's equally no doubt that the Karabelnikova-type workers believe this is their own factory, their own society. There's no doubt that the movements they originate represent the hopes of all the workers for a better life.

This kind of thing I could find to my heart's content. But I didn't see what good it was to me. There was nothing man-bites-dogish about it. It was all man-does-work, and whoever



wrote a book about that? And so I thought I had good cause to worry. All the interesting things I had seen and done seemed to prove that the only thing I would be able to say I had discovered in Russia was—that the Russians work. They don't pay attention to anything but work. That's all I could say—and it never occurred to me that I could say just that!

That's why I wanted to get out of Moscow. The grass is always greener in the other fellow's yard, and I thought that if I got out of Moscow I'd just stumble on the secret of the Soviet Union, the real subject of my book, that wasn't to be found in the capital. I did, too. Stalingrad taught me that the Soviet secret is—work; the same old thing I had seen in Moscow! It's just that there's something about Stalingrad that makes you willing to listen. When you measured what they had built in two decades, how the Germans had destroyed it in its entirety and how the Russians were rebuilding it again, you wanted to apologize for getting in the way. And as I saw day by day how much heroism could go into the work of wartime and peacetime, it slowly dawned on me that the only thing I could say about Russia, the only thing I had discovered, was not such a bad thing to say after all! Yes, the Russians work. This I had seen all along but only now I realized that it might be a big story precisely because we never tell such a story, never think it's a story. We, who hear nothing but talk about war-worries, armaments, the need to launch a "war of aggression" (only "to compel cooperation for peace," of course), we who read and hear about Russia only in terms of dark things of terror, come to Russia and find **the Russians have no time** for anything sensational in our sense, that they absolutely refuse to be diverted from their completely unnewsworthy daily dedication to humdrum little tasks that make up the biggest job the world has ever seen. A quiet story, yes, but there are times when quietness can be positively sensational!

## CHAPTER X

# A Rage to Learn

THERE IS a fever sweeping the Soviet Union, an epidemic they are not even trying to halt. It is study-fever. Everyone goes to school. There are more than 37,000,000 people in regular schools but that hardly suggests the passion for learning that is characteristic of Russia today. Perhaps the most striking open evidence is the way the whole people participates in the big public discussions of scientific questions that the authorities launch from time to time. A year or so ago, it was the "discussion on biology" in which the geneticists were given such a drubbing. While I was there, it was a discussion on the state of linguistics—the science of language—in the Soviet Union. The biology business was closely linked with the whole management and direction of Soviet agriculture, so it quite evidently had more practical day-to-day importance than linguistics has. Yet Stalin himself, who had spoken no word during the biology controversy, entered the linguistics debate in a decisive manner. Thereafter, over a period of months, he gave public replies to questions put to him by leading people in the linguistics divisions of major universities and institutes. The whole matter was considered of such general public significance that the debate was conducted from beginning to end in the pages of *Pravda*. Once a week that newspaper added two full pages to its usual four and the entire extra space was reserved to long articles blasting or defending the theories of the outstanding

Soviet philologist, the late Professor N. Y. Marr who was half-Scottish, half-Georgian. A British journalist commented wryly to me: "When our papers got a little more newsprint, they printed extra comics; when the Russians get additional newsprint, they run a series on—linguistics!"

It is a curious fact that a great many of the leading people in Soviet linguistics are Georgian, as is Stalin. Perhaps in the Caucasus, with its many proud and ancient civilizations (of which we Americans are so woefully ignorant) and with so many languages rubbing shoulders (or should I say tongues?) there is much incentive to ponder the nature and origin of speech. I followed the discussion with great interest and was frequently on the verge of exploding. For however learned the scientific contributors might have been, some of them said things that sounded like awful nonsense to me. There were those, for instance, who berated their colleagues for failure to acknowledge the class nature of all language.

"What in heaven's name is a class language?" I asked my interpreter in genuine bewilderment. She made no pretense of great interest in the debate, and avoided brain-strain by the good-humored reply: "Oh, this is a discussion; one says one thing and then I suppose another will answer him."

But as the discussion continued, no participant provided any answer to my question. I was therefore delighted when, in entering the lists, Stalin dismissed the theory of class-language as gibberish. Professing no competence in linguistics, he spoke only as an expert in Marxism-Leninism, the philosophical foundation of all Soviet science and planning. But in the course of his writing, he revealed a very considerable knowledge of linguistics after all. That is not too surprising in a man who, still in his teens, edited revolutionary papers in three languages, and who, in his early twenties, was already the foremost Marxist expert on the national question.

Stalin said other things that indicated the discussion probably had considerable political significance. For instance, he declared that leading men in the field of linguistics had maintained a virtual reign of terror in their field, forcing acceptance of the

theories of Professor Marr, theories Stalin dismissed contemptuously. He said of certain educators, that if he did not personally know them to be honest men, he would consider that they had been engaged in deliberate sabotage. Now this suggests that the subject of linguistics was chosen for public discussion because some ugly conditions existed in that portion of the academic scientific world. These conditions were not remedied quietly, behind the back of the public. They were attacked openly in the manner I have described; by this criticism and "self-criticism," public opinion was mobilized to force swift remedy of the evils named. Nor was it intended to be a lesson exclusively for philologists. The key sentence in Stalin's article clearly indicates that the whole Soviet scientific world was expected to draw some conclusions. "No science can develop and flourish," said Stalin, "without a battle of opinions, without freedom of criticism."

These Soviet discussions never get into our press in the way they happen: big detailed debates followed by tens of millions of Soviet citizens. We get little scraps of hints of fearful "purges," and a picture of the discussion that is completely unrecognizable to anyone who has been there and witnessed the whole affair. Russian absoluteness is no help in this respect. Russians are rather like Americans in argument: they are positive to the point of infuriation. What they decide today, they give out as the last word in human progress; and tomorrow, when they reverse yesterday's position, they are just as positive. But if you discount these mannerisms—Russian or American—it is often easy enough to find the practical reasons for a public discussion.

Take the current discussion on coeducation. I visited a lot of schools and talked to a lot of parents about the reasons for separating the sexes in Soviet schools. The separation was initiated in wartime and a lot of theoretic reasons were put forward in very vigorous fashion, to justify this separation (or, as they call it, *bifurkatzia*—bifurcation). Well, there *are* theoretic arguments that can be made for it. Don't we have a number of good schools, including public high schools in New York City

to my knowledge, that are exclusively for one or the other sex? But most of the parents I met, preferred coeducation on the ground that they, as children, had learned to get along with the other sex earlier that way and had made life-long friends. Then one day a mild article in the *Literary Gazette* reopened the whole subject. And most of the subsequent articles and letters were as positively against *bifurkatzia* as, I suppose, they were for it when the plunge was taken.

So what of it? That is the way of life. The Russians, having tried separation, have found that it has drawbacks as well as virtues. So they are re-examining their position, publicly, and it is generally supposed that there will now be a swing back toward coeducation—though not as intemperate a swing as the original shift to “bifurcation.”

Even the wholesale quality of the wartime shift is not quite so much a matter of Russianness as you might suppose. It was probably due to a very simple and grim fact of Russian history—that many, many, many boys, young schoolboys, weren’t in school in wartime. They were away dying at the front. And I haven’t used that word “dying” rhetorically. A girl I knew was invited to a reunion of her graduating class of ten years ago, but she didn’t want to go because not one boy of her class was alive today. The first public school I visited in the Soviet Union also bears out this point, so let me tell you just a little about it.

P.S. 201 on the Leningrad Highway in the northern outskirts of Moscow, is now a ten-year girl’s school. It is a good school, one of the better-run “middle schools,” with an able principal who wears the Order of Lenin, a sign that he has been an active member of the highly honored teaching profession for at least twenty-five years. But there are many good schools and many teachers who wear the Order of Lenin and get the accompanying service pension while continuing active duty and drawing full pay. So P.S. 201 is not unique in those respects. If you tell a Russian, however, that P.S. 201 was Zoya’s school, he will really show interest. And though Zoya is a very common first name, he will know you mean Zoya Kosmodyemenskaya.

At the beginning of the fall term of school, Zoya was the star pupil of the tenth grade in P.S. 201, which was then a coeducational institution like all public schools. But she was also a Young Communist. The Germans were sweeping down on Moscow, so she left school and reported for duty as a partisan in occupied territory. A few weeks later she was captured by the Germans, tortured, and on November 29, hanged in a village not far from the capital. The hanging was intended to be an example to the population, but it boomeranged. Slight, serious and pretty, looking not at all like an Amazon but like the schoolgirl patriot she was, Zoya spoke words of fire from the very scaffold, and those words reached the whole Soviet people and made Zoya one of the Soviet immortals.

The news of Zoya's death ended the youth of her classmates at P.S. 201. Nine members of her class immediately volunteered for the Red Army, and one of the nine was her brother Shura (Alexander), her mother's only other child. Shura was seriously wounded several times but survived to command a battery of heavy artillery blasting the Germans on German soil. Thirteen days before the war's end, in the battle for Koenigsberg (now Kaliningrad), he was killed in action. Each May 1 and each November 29, the children of P. S. 201 decorate the graves of Zoya and Shura. But this school has the responsibility of keeping green the memory of other former pupils, too. Of the nine who volunteered to avenge the murder of Zoya, two were eventually assigned to the Far East. They are alive today. All the rest took their places at the German front and died defending their country. Probably very few boys came up from the ninth grade to occupy the vacant desks in the tenth. On the contrary, as these boys fell, the ninth graders took their places at the front. Couldn't that be one of the reasons the change to "bifurcation" was made in such a sweeping fashion? There wasn't much to "bifurcate;" only the girls were in school!

There are many, many things in the Soviet schools, and pre-schools, and setup for child-care and for the health of the child from before birth to the grave, that are different than

ours. Different and beyond question far superior to ours. I must say Russia, even in the relatively difficult conditions of today, is a kind of Utopia for children. The pre-school arrangements are particularly astonishing. I went to a foundling home—the Russians don't call it that; like an orphanage, it is a "Children's Home"—outside Moscow where 130 babies had a staff of 108 persons including three fulltime doctors to care for them. Incidentally, there are no "foundlings;" no baby has to be abandoned with a little note pinned to his blanket. The mother unable to keep a baby can bring him here and have him cared for without giving up her right to reclaim him at any time; even the unwed mother has that right.

The handling of children in the nurseries and kindergartens is completely scientific, modern—and personal. They get the usual fish-oils and fruit juices and extra vitamins. At three months they are vaccinated for smallpox and at six they get their second anti-tuberculosis shot (by a law every Soviet baby is first vaccinated against tuberculosis at birth) and a third at one year. The day's play is with windows wide open in the coldest weather and in all but the worst weather they sleep virtually outdoors, in sleeping bags. I was struck by a little thing I saw when visiting District Nursery 101 in Moscow. It is in a building that belonged, before the revolution, to a rich merchant; later, the dancer Isadora Duncan admired its decorated ceilings and parquet floors and it became her studio. I saw the babies—165 of them—put to sleep on the sleeping porches. And though only the little noses were visible, every one of the forty-eight persons on the staff seemed to recognize each baby and call it by name. That seemed to me very important—that the hundreds of thousands of people who work with babies and children in Russia do so because they love them.

There's no doubt about it, you'd never have to worry about your children in Russia. The nursery-kindergarten system is universal. There's a nursery and a kindergarten in every district in Moscow, but every industrial establishment of any size maintains its own. Your infant, if not at home, must be in a nursery hard by your place of work so you can come in and

nurse him at the proper intervals (the law says you must be given time off for this). After he's a year old the neighborhood nursery where you can leave him in the morning before work is better. Perhaps conditions at home—father killed in the war, temporary illness, or both parents working inconvenient shifts this week, make it impossible to take care of him at home. Why then, you can leave him in the nursery fulltime, visiting at your convenience and taking him home on your day off. I can tell you from my own amazed observation that the children there don't pine for home. They are not simply well-cared for, they are picked up and petted and fussed over in the way babies love, and they have an advantage over home that weighs heavily; other babies the same age playing about them.

I had hardly recovered from one astonishment than another overtook me. I found that when summer comes, this whole continent-wide network of nurseries and kindergartens, with its thousands of workers and hundreds of thousands of children, moves, lock, stock and babies to the country. In the Ministry of Education had 16,000 kindergartens with 746,000 children and it operated summer kindergartens for 270,000 children plus 15,000 vacation resorts for school-children and pre-school children. But this does not half tell the story. The nurseries belong to the Ministry of Health, not to the Ministry of Education, so they aren't included in the figures. And the majority of schoolchildren take their vacations outside the field covered by the Ministry of Education. For instance, the Pioneer camps. Last summer there were 6,000 such camps with three million children in the seven-to-fifteen-year group and two million younger children.

There are so many things done for babies and youngsters! One of my Russian friends had a boy going-on three, and of course I watched everything she did with him and asked about it. I saw her bringing his bottles of milk and Kefir (you may be acquainted with that kind of fermented sour-milk preparation under some other name) and learned that there are special Milk Kitchens where mothers can get formula all put up to



doctor's prescription, prepared cereal ready to serve—anything the baby needs—free, if you please!

The provision for the health of infants and children—it would be more accurate to say for the health of the Soviet citizen from before birth to death—is simply fantastic. There are private practitioners and clinics you can go to if it is more convenient and you have plenty of money, but the private area is drying up to almost nothing because the free services are too complete for competition. Once again, as in the case of kindergartens and nurseries, every district has a big clinic. Each general practitioner in it is assigned to a given geographical area so that there is one certain doctor you always have the right to see or who must come to see you if you are unable to come to the clinic. The clinic has also every kind of specialist and a wide range of therapeutic equipment, especially electrical devices which are very popular in Russia.

I said the care begins before birth; as soon as a woman suspects she's pregnant, the doctors get after her. The first thing is to record her pregnancy at her place of work where they must, by law, give her seventy-five days paid leave to cover the last weeks of pregnancy and the first weeks of motherhood. Until her pregnancy, she goes to the clinics available to all adults, but at this point she switches to another nation-wide network of clinics just for her and her baby; the Consultation Centers. They educate her for motherhood; they send her to the hospital as early as necessary—the whole period of her pregnancy if necessary; they send her to a wholly different system of clinics—the Women's Clinics—if she has that kind of problem; they get her a bed in a maternity hospital and the day she gets home she finds a trained woman waiting for her to help her through the first week or so. The doctor comes at once to see her and the baby; after that, until he is three years old, she takes him regularly to the Consultation Center. At three, they graduate to the Children's Polyclinics, still another nation-wide system of medical centers with elaborate therapeutic and laboratory equipment.

Throughout, the emphasis is on prevention. But of course

people do get sick and then there are wonderful sanatoria and resorts for them. All that was once the playground of the rich of Russia has been turned into the nucleus of a resort system for working people in need of health-restoration, rest or simple relaxation. Of all this a huge slice has been set aside for the children. On this score there can be no doubt. If I merely list the things I saw and did, you will know how little of it can actually find space to describe:

I went to nurseries and kindergarten and schools in Moscow and Stalingrad and Tiflis and on collective farms. I went to boys' schools and girls' schools, four-year schools and seven-year schools and ten-year schools, *technicums* and universities and institutes, schools for retarded children, schools for the hard-of-hearing, night schools for workers. I went to foundling homes, orphanages, children's tuberculosis sanitariums. I went through the amazingly complex network of clinics, I went to ordinary hospitals and maternity hospitals and children's hospitals and the special on-the-job, sleep-in facilities industrial establishments maintain—in addition to their own regular doctors, clinics and hospitals—for workers who get run-down and can be built up again while working. I talked to the Ministry of Education of the Russian Republic and the social insurance experts of the central trade unions and the children's division of the Ministry of Health. I went through the House of Pioneers, the House of the Children's Book which displays the output of the State Publishing House for Children; I attended the Children's Theatre, visited the ubiquitous "circles" in more than one House of Culture, and sat in on the special "concerts" where the greatest actors, singers, dancers, poets, writers of the Soviet Union perform or recite for children only. I rode on railways operated by children and saw their summer camps and resorts. I saw elementary schools where each science class had its own laboratory, its own moving picture projector and electrically-operated blinds to darken the room. I saw the extensive library of educational films the cinema industry has produced to the order of the Ministry of Education for use in these schools. I saw astonishing libraries—an elementary school with

a library up to forty thousand volumes and separate libraries of several thousand volumes for each of its five science classes. In short I saw that children rule the roost!

Now I have no doubt that someone else could go out and look around and find serious shortcomings in each of these fields. Moreover, the very wealth of provision for children is a commentary on the difficulties of Soviet life today. Take the nursery question. In that same District Nursery 101 I mentioned, twenty of the 165 babies were all-week babies that particular week. I think nurseries are a blessing to parent and child, but I wouldn't want to give up my children all week, and I am sure that most of the parents of those twenty babies feel the same way about it. They do it because they have no choice. Everything possible is done to avoid separation, but they need their jobs, their jobs need them, and there are times when conditions don't permit them to have the children except on their days off. The necessities of construction and production at this stage of Soviet history dictate their own laws. And the first law is that the amenities of life are subordinate to the necessities of life. A man would be a fool to prettify that picture; it is the picture of life on what is still a frontier, a frontier whose conditions of existence we Americans no longer remember.

In a frontier country you can expect to find everything and its opposite. Practically everyone who has ever written about the Soviet Union has described it as a land of bewildering contrasts. I am quite ready to agree that it is a land of contradictions. But then they go on from that point to argue that it is hopeless to generalize about Russia and impossible to understand it. There I disagree. I think you and I, the non-experts, are perfectly capable of understanding the Soviet Union. All we need is a few months inside Russia—and a firm grasp of “the job” as the key to understanding. When you approach the whole business from the point of view of the task the Russians have set themselves, all contradictions are resolved and it turns out that there are no Soviet mysteries, enigmas, riddles. Nothing is secret!

There is an easy way to understand what the Russians are trying to do. If you were Stalin what would you be doing? Start in 1917 when you inherited one of the most backward countries on earth, a multi-national continent. Of course "Stalin" didn't inherit it. But the responsibility for leadership was taken by the Communist Party and Stalin is certainly its undisputed leader today. In the United States, Stalin is thought of as making all the decisions all by himself, and that is why it is convenient to pose the problem in terms of one man: what would you have done if you were Stalin?

I think you or I would have done just what Stalin did! The minute the wars of intervention and civil wars were over, we would have set about establishing modern industry in Russia. How else could we have begun to raise a poverty-crushed mass of abysmally ignorant people from their dirt and darkness? I never saw the old Russia but, like you, have read about it. And, from my reading, I know that in material and cultural development, in sheer backwardness, it was much like parts of the world I *have* seen, say India or West Africa. To rescue Russia, you'd have to build factories; to feed the factories you'd have to develop mines, and cultivate cotton—process and produce everything that a civilized people need for a modern way of life. To start industry you need workers; therefore you must reform agriculture so that a few men with machines can produce what it formerly took thousands of men with wooden plows to scratch from the soil. Then the thousands can go to work in the factories. Moreover, if a few raise all the grain, they can sell most of it to your new workers, whereas the many farmers who used to raise a little grain, couldn't sell much of it—they ate it up themselves.

So you see, if you were Stalin, you wouldn't have had much choice. What's more, you would have realized that you couldn't take your time about it. Fourteen capitalist nations, under the then leadership of Winston Churchill, had just tried to overthrow your government, had shot down your comrades in Baku and supplied arms to every Tsarist butcher who would fight you. They made no secret of their intention, to start

something again. And Churchill had hardly quit making loud warlike noises than Hitler rose to power in Germany and announced that the smashing of Soviet power was *his* divine mission. Yes, you would have had to hurry because your factories were needed not only to raise your people to civilized heights but to arm them so they could defend those heights.

Factories will make the things you need to live a civilized life, but neither the factories nor the things they make will civilize people. That's a separate job, a tremendous job, a job that won't do itself. You've got to plan it and carry it out. When you begin planning, the first thing you realize is that, once again, you've got to start building—schools this time. It's such a big job, at a time when the building of factories and the manufacture of farm machinery is so urgent, that you'd like to postpone it. But you can't. You can't because you can't industrialize the country without educating the people. You can't have modern industry without workers, literate workers, people who have been to school.

It is so easy for us to forget how relatively easy a road we travelled! We started life as an industrial and trading nation, in a small way. European capital, often in the form of the machines made abroad, skilled European labor, came to ease our way. We had a hundred and fifty years to build and learn and catch up with Europe. The Russians started cold. They had always to expect the beginning of a boycott on the sale of foreign machinery to Russia. They had to build their industry in a hurry if they expected to survive. They had to have workers with *know-how*.

This isn't a moral question, it's a material one. The Chinese coolie inherited by the new People's Republic is too ignorant to help manufacture machines for new factories or to operate them after they're manufactured. So was the Russian *mujik* of 1917. He didn't have know-how. Under Tsarism, he not only *wasn't* taught but he *couldn't* be taught to operate machines and take care of them properly. In our own pre-Civil War South, slaves couldn't be trusted with relatively expensive

horses and iron plows. You couldn't seem to teach them to take proper care of either; they quickly broke the plow and killed the horse. That's why the wooden plow and the mule marked the feudal level of Southern farming—the level of "poor White" as well as Negro farming, by the way. The slave couldn't be taught to protect his master's horse and plow because he had no interest in learning—while he was a slave. You had to free him first; you had to make a man of a slave. And it was so in Russia, you had to make a man out of a *mujik* if you wanted to make an advanced industrial country out of a backward agrarian one.

They did just that. Is that so mysterious, so "doctrinaire," so "theoretical"? Why, our own experience throws light on it. A modern Southern American industrial worker or farmer, Negro or white, is a different man from his father. He can not only use an iron plow and a horse but he can run a mechanical cotton-picker—if you only give him the chance. A change "in the mode of production," you see, changed human nature. A different social system created new production techniques—and new men to apply the techniques. Well, that's what Stalin had to do in Russia.

Yes, the Russians set out to change human nature, to make men out of *mujiks*. The first step was to give the whole Russian people an elementary education. They had to be taught to read and write. Of course Russia would need skilled workers and engineers who would have to have more education than that, but the big need was for an unlimited supply of workers who, however unskilled, would still have to be much more civilized people than the pre-revolutionary *mujiks*.

So if you were Stalin you would have started building schools. Enough schools for 150,000,000 people! And he built them—and is still building more. I got some figures for Russia—not the whole Soviet Union, but the Russian Republic which is just one of the sixteen constituent republics of the union though it is overwhelmingly the largest—from Ludmila Dubrovina, sub-Minister of Education. Dubrovina, a warm, vivacious woman who had just returned from a visit to China and who

has also studied the British school-system on the spot, told me there are now 120,000 schools in Russia. The ten-year schools alone have 8,000,000 pupils and 800,000 teachers. There are 3,600 orphanage-schools with 383,000 children and there are 23,000 children in special schools such as the schools for the deaf and schools for the blind. In Moscow alone, four hundred of the approximately six hundred schools are in post-revolutionary buildings, but in the next five years five hundred more must be built. And Moscow is not Russia, much less the Soviet Union! What about the Eskimos and the Yakuts, the Tatars and the Chuvash—and scores of other nationalities within the Russian Republic? Not to speak of the Georgians and the Uzbeks and the Azerbaijanis and the Ukrainians and the Byelo-Russians and the other nationalities who have their own governments and own Ministries of Education! They have to have buildings, too.

But a school-system is much more than a mere chain of little red school-houses. To build a school-system, the Russians had to bring an alphabet to the Kirghiz before the latter could start learning to read and write. Even harder: they had to get the nomad Kazakhs and Gypsies settled down. They had to find, in that thin layer of the population that had been to school at all, enough people to start teaching the others. Or at least to make a bluff at starting all those millions on their way to the three R's. They had to compile textbooks for every subject and print millions of each book. They had to start teachers' training schools as quickly as possible in order to give their semi-literate teachers the crudest kind of idea of how to start teaching. And there must be some *system* in all this if you are going to have a school-system. That is, you've got to have some principles that run through all the confusion and create order; you must formulate a theory of education applicable to your society and a system of pedagogical principles consistent with this theory, to guide teachers in their daily work.

If you appreciate the scope of that undertaking, you will understand much that you see in Russia. For no one in his right mind will suppose that they have completed all that to

their own satisfaction. Think, for example, how hastily they must have put together the indispensable textbooks, often by translating English or German books quite unsuitable to any Russian school let alone to a Socialist society. Inevitably they must be constantly making disagreeable surprises and working feverishly to revise their textbooks. You can get rid of the worst inadequacies in a hurry, but it takes a long time to get books that fully satisfy the needs of the schools in a new kind of society.

Then there are the teachers. Having started with many barely literate teachers, they had to institute a whole system for educating these teachers on-the-job. Today there are, in Russia alone, 423 day and 280 night teacher-training schools creating 188,000 new teachers for the lower elementary grades alone. But the main task is still to improve the mass of teachers in the classrooms. And for this purpose there is a great network of institutions I caught up with at various stages of my visit. For instance, at a kindergarten, I encountered observers from one of the pedagogical institutes—the school of higher learning in the field of education. They were taking notes on the physical culture classes, so that there would be information on what games are suitable to what age groups, exactly how long each age group can stay at each given exercise, how the teacher must conduct the work to get the most out of the children and so on. You can see that this kind of material will add up to a basis for training kindergarten teachers and for compiling textbooks to guide them in their work. Similar intensive work is done in every subject for every grade from candidate for the nursery to Doctor of Philosophy. I accidentally discovered an Institute for Raising the Qualifications of Teachers, one day in Stalingrad, and found that there is one in every region (oblast) of Russia. Every single schoolteacher has out-of-class work every single term, under the direction of the Institute, work that brings him together with other teachers in periodic conferences, work that brings to the attention of all teachers any clever idea or helpful visual material that any one teacher anywhere has brought out for the teaching of any one little



point in a given course. But much of the work is more theoretical; it adds up to a deeper understanding of the nature of education itself and the function of teaching.

It is hard to tell you just how intensively they are working to improve the quality of education. In each school you will find a teacher's room; in that room, or in the school library, you will see a rack of magazines for teachers. An extraordinary number of such magazines is published; once I counted over fifty. There may be a magazine on the teaching of the Russian language in the four-year schools, a separate one for the seven-year schools, a third for the ten-year schools, another for schools in non-Russian-speaking republics or areas. A like series for the teachers of foreign languages. So with each subject taught in school. And then the more general, theoretic magazines, and the ones like *Family and School*, a kind of national parent-teachers magazine. The theses the teachers prepare, as part of their work under the Institute for Raising Qualifications, are also published when they are good enough, sometimes after they have been read at the conferences.

Do you see what a staggering mass of first-hand impressions you can get in just a few months in Russia? The danger is that they will overwhelm you as they did, in fact, overwhelm me until I stumbled on my magic key to Russia—"the job." The job provides a context for otherwise scattered and unrelated impressions. And the importance of context came to me very strongly, after my return from Russia, when I read a booklet on the schools of the Soviet Union. The booklet was accurate, but where was the spirit, where was the Soviet people's feeling about education, where was the exciting discovery I had made that the Russians are hungry for knowledge—and willing to go hungry to obtain knowledge?

I am not criticizing the writer of the booklet who did what she set out to do: compile some facts about Soviet schools from Soviet periodicals without going to Russia. I am only trying to say that the booklet convinced me I had to do a different kind of job. For unless you go to Russia and catch the spirit of the thing, you can't even find the important facts. The booklet, for

instance, spoke chiefly of the formal school-system, but I remembered most strongly the out-of-school educational activities, the correspondence divisions of all leading schools, the night schools, the classes all through the winter at the clubhouse of each collective farm, the "circles" in which millions of children, youth, and adults follow familiar hobbies (photography, model plane building, painting and so on) but millions of others work on science, languages and similar studies carried over from the schools. One thing above all others warned me against the "factual" approach. And that was that the booklet gave only the barest notice to the one school I thought the most interesting and Russian kind of school I had seen, the school most characteristic of the present state of the Soviet Union—the factory-school.

I discovered the factory-school one day in Stalingrad. I was talking to Peter Samsonov, the most highly skilled worker in the Stalingrad Tractor Factory. He is the star operator of what we would call a grinder, I think, in the tool and die department. It is the highest precision machine in the factory and does work one micron fine. I wish I had time to tell you his own story, his five years at the front, his meeting with our GI's on the Elbe, his return to Stalingrad without having once heard from his wife in five years; how he met his wife again and found that she had likewise not once had news of him in those five years but never once doubted that he was alive and would be restored to her. Or even how he became the best operator in the factory. Space however, permits only that part of his story that bears on the factory-school. And this is it:

Talking to him at his machine one day, I hesitated to go on because I feared I was keeping him from work too long, and I said so. "Oh, don't worry about that," he grinned. "I'm working on August!" So I told him what was on my mind. Here was one department, the *creme de la creme*. There were six of these ultra-precision machines—one Pratt-Whitney and five Swiss ones—in it, and perhaps the factory needed no more than eighteen operators in all. Now surely there must be workers who would like to rise from their benches to this level

and who never in a lifetime could get a crack at it. In other words, here, too, apparently, as in the United States, was a hard knot of "aristocrats of labor" whose ranks were closed to newcomers. Samsonov laughed at that. The need of high skills was inexhaustible in the Soviet Union and even in the tractor factory, he said. Just find them more men who could do the quality of work required in this department, and they'd find place for them. Well, I pursued, how would a man get to know enough about this work to decide, in the first place, that he would like to learn it? And after that how could he learn it? Trying to answer, but not sure what was unclear to me, Samsonov mentioned, in passing, an operator in the department who only three years earlier had been a country schoolboy. I seized on this. "Where is he, let's get him in on this," I said.

"*Pazhalista*," replied Samsonov.

"Hey, Vanya, will you come over here a minute?" he called.

A very blond and very young worker looked up from his work across the room and walked over to us. Vanya Yermilov said he had attended "middle school" in the hamlet of Skurishinskaya which is in the administrative region of Stalingrad. Whether he was too impatient to finish or the school had only nine grades, I don't know, but he had completed only that many years of school when he packed up and went to Stalingrad. A place was ready for him in the factory-school, with lodging in a dormitory, food in the dining room, beginner's pay. The course was six months and it began with a tour of the factory. In that way, the newcomers could see all the kinds of work (which was helpful in choosing their own goal) and also could see where each job fitted into the overall task of the factory.

Vanya immediately picked out the grinder. It was like choosing to start at the top, but there was no hesitation in accepting his bid. Thereafter his training was on that machine. The teachers are, of course, themselves skilled operators; part of the school-work is done in the plant itself; and in addition Samsonov gave the boy private lessons. The youngster's choice

was a kind of challenge to Samsonov personally and to the factory as a whole.

Well, that's all there is to it. He made good. It was something they all rather took for granted, but I was impressed by the idea of a country boy's being able to decide he wanted to learn the most exacting machine-work in the world, and being told, "Please!" and given lessons and six months later being one of the twenty top-skilled workers in a factory that employs tens of thousands. I will put it to American auto workers whether a Detroit schoolboy, having taken out working papers, could get a crack at that job. But far beyond that, the school itself strikes me as something unique. You can go to a trade-school in the United States but when you start job-hunting you are told, "Go out and get some experience, then we'll consider hiring you." And anyhow we have no trade-schools that give you real in-the-factory training, on pay, coupled with understanding of the whole production process—and a job waiting when you graduate.

I went into the factory-school question further, after that. I recalled that Lydia Karabelnikova, the girl who started the "economy" movement in the Paris Commune Shoe Factory, had entered that factory through the door of its school. And in the Red October Steel Mill, I found over and over that the factory-school was not just for the newcomers—all the workers seem to go to school all the time. Like Peter Tushkan, the smelter.

Tushkan is one of the novelist Sholokov's people—a Don Cossack. Born in Stalingrad region twenty-one years ago, on a collective farm, he always knew he wanted to be a worker. He came to Stalingrad in , with an eighth-grade education, to learn smelting. His marks had been excellent in his village school—he held up his hand, fingers outspread, when I asked about his marks, to show that they were all five's, the top grade in Russian schools—and the physics and chemistry courses were useful preparation for his factory courses in smelting.

In the factory-school, he had two and a half hours of theory each day, then an hour and a half break for lunch, followed by

two and a half hours of practical work. Tushkan's grades in the mill-school were as good as those in his village school and in May he began work as an assistant smelter.

He had such a natural talent for his job that from the start he earned not less than thirteen or fourteen hundred rubles a month, which is a lot. In three months, moreover, he became a full smelter. He "overfulfilled his norms" from his first day as a smelter, producing more tons than his quota, burning less fuel than his allotment, and registering a greater economy of implements. He increased his output each day, but far from concluding that he therefore knew it all, he decided he needed more study. In the spring he entered a School of Masters, another school in the mill itself, to begin a two years' course for specialists. All the smelters keep up their study in this way; so much so that the School of Masters is a three-shift school to accomodate smelters from every shift.

The mill's engineers do much of the teaching, though there are professional teachers, too, particularly for academic subjects such as History of the Constitution of the U.S.S.R., geography, and the Russian language. The technical subjects include physics, chemistry, and the rational use of labor. The smelters go to school three times a week, four and a half hours each time. It adds up to this: that they learn to know what they are really doing when they make steel. And this enables them to be something more than mere cogs in a machine.

In Tushkan's case, already he had become the best smelter in his department; he established himself as the best smelter in the mill, and in April he received a telegram from the central committee of trade unions of the metal industry announcing that he had beat every smelter in the Soviet Union for the first quarter of 1941. He got more tonnage (of the hardest, most specialized steels) per square foot of furnace floor at each pouring than the "norm," producing 1,067 tons more than his quota for the quarter. He met all quality requirements and still managed to save 79 tons of fuel, enough for ten chargings. It goes without saying that all the customary national honors attended this achievement. But he

is still not through with school. In autumn he will enter an advanced technical school of metallurgy to take four years of work which will qualify him as a metallurgical-technician. And all without leaving his furnace!

The factory-school can do wonderful things for a man. You may remember my mentioning, in passing, the steelworker Ivan Aloyshkin, one of the workers I visited in his home. It was the school that gave him a chance to become a steel-smelter and then rise to the rank of twice Deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. That's quite a rise if you know that his first job when he came to what was then still Tsaritsyn, was—collector of garbage!

I can sum up the importance of the factory-school in a word. Whatever the compulsion to give the Russian people the elements of an ordinary education in a hurry, Stalin had even a greater need to teach them *know-how*. The factory-school combines broad instruction as to the place of a worker in Soviet society, the place of each job in the whole Soviet production-process, and down-to-earth know-how. The fools who said the Russians didn't have the know-how to build an atom-bomb, and who are still saying they don't know enough to be able to match us in this that or the other, evidently don't know about the factory-school. Or about a lot of other things that are turning the Old World into the New World and the New World into an Old World!

A lot of people will be shocked at the idea that the Soviet Union may be the New World. And many anti-Soviet experts will recite crude things that can be found in Russia to laugh off the idea. Well, there are crude things there. But if you look at a calendar, it may affect your thinking about this question. For we started by talking about what Stalin had to do beginning in 1917. That was only figurative. In 1917, Russia was exhausted below her normal level of appalling poverty, by World War I. Several years of civil wars followed and then it took several more to restore the pre-revolutionary level of life. So we can say that he really began in . That's

a reasonable date to choose because it is the actual year the first five-year plan was initiated.

the Nazis came. That means no schools were built in the next five years; on the contrary, all those previously set up in a large part of European Russia were destroyed along with factories, farmhouses and farm machinery. For several years after the war, the Russians couldn't be said to be building new things, they were merely rebuilding what had been destroyed. By the time I got to the Soviet Union, they had just about got back where they were in . Now do a little arithmetic. The Soviet school-system we have described, Soviet society as a whole, is just thirteen years old! Can it be that some people in our world are afraid to give them another twenty peaceful years to get on with their work?

## CHAPTER XI

# Show Business

ONE SUMMER evening in Moscow I visited a friend who shared an apartment with a teacher and the latter's fifteen-year-old son. The boy's mother had not yet come home when he announced that he was going out, so he scribbled a note: "Mama, I am going to the theatre with the boys." That was the truth—but not the whole truth. He and his gang were certainly going that night to the *Green Theatre*—the big open-air theatre in the Gorky Park of Culture and Rest—as, moreover, they would do every night of the summer season. But they were not going in through the main gate. They found a hole in a fence more convenient because it avoided delicate questions of finance.

Now at this point you might be tempted to say something about boys being boys the whole world over, since gate-crashing is certainly not unknown to us. But I hardly think any of you have ever heard of a gang of American adolescents employing their ingenuity and daring to witness what they would contemptuously describe as "toe-dancing." These Russian boys were all keyed up for a performance of Chaikovsky's classical ballet, *Swan Lake*. Among other ballets and operas on the *Green Theatre's* nightly schedule, *Swan Lake* would appear perhaps half a dozen times in the course of the summer and they would see it every time!

That story accurately indicates the importance of the theatre



in Soviet life. I think I saw more shows in the Soviet Union than I had seen in my whole life. Which is as it should be, for there is more theatre in Russia than in the other five-sixths of the world put together. The night I arrived in Moscow, I saw a pink poster half as big as a billboard, on the wall of the Intourist Service Bureau in the Hotel National. It was a theatre calendar covering the next eleven days. I counted twenty-five theatres plus the *Bolshoy*—Moscow's Grand Opera House—and its *filial* or branch theatre. Each house offered three to five different plays in that period, except the *Bolshoy* where nine operas and ballets were scheduled. Of course there was a separate bill for concerts (with at least as many events as are available in New York) and a third one for movies.

An American can begin describing the Soviet theatre to other Americans only by defining "theatre." For the word does not have the same meaning in Russia that it has in those few American cities that have access to plays and players. When we use the word, we mean a *building* in which plays are performed, on and off, in season. The owner of the theatre may love Shakespeare or may never have heard of him; whatever the case, he operates the building strictly for what it will yield in rent. He has no other connection with the people who, from time to time rent his theatre and hire other people to perform a play in it. The men who rent the theatre, in like manner, may or may not love the stage. It doesn't matter. Love isn't what determines whether or not there is to be a play in the theatre. Business considerations decide that. It is not for nothing that the papers they eagerly read are *trade* papers. The leading periodical, *Variety*, is concerned not with art, literature or culture, but with the multi-billion dollar "entertainment industry." Actors are not artists; they are people in "show business."

When they say "theatre" in the Soviet Union, they mean quite a different thing. A theatre is a permanent company of professional actors, directors and all the other specialists who collaborate in the production and performance of plays. It is a company housed in its own building, owning its own props

and performing with a smoothness and mastery that a team can acquire only when it has played together for thirty or a hundred years, handing down its traditions from father to son.

The revolution did not create this theatre—it inherited it, and the Bolsheviks have cherished their inheritance. Of course they have built some new buildings. In Stalingrad where the dramatic theatre, the operetta and the children's theatre, as well as many movie houses, were destroyed, there are now new movie theatres and a new building that temporarily houses the dramatic theatre company but will be the *Palace of Physical Culture* when they have replaced the destroyed theatres and added an opera house and, perhaps, a puppet theatre. In Moscow, too, there are such modern structures as the Red Army Theatre with a simply immense stage, an almost too spacious-seeming auditorium and enough miles of halls, foyers, lounging rooms and what not to hold a track meet; and Chaikovsky Hall, for concerts, the best designed and most comfortable large auditorium I have ever been in. But for all that, it is the old that predominates. The untouched pre-revolutionary gilt and plush *Bolsboy*, with its double-decker box for the royal family, is the Soviet synonym for "theatre." Nor would anyone think of "modernizing" the curtain of the famous *Moscow Art Theatre* with its symbolic seagull.

The seagull is a part of the history of the *M'kbat* (the familiar nickname of the *Moscow Art Theatre*). The story is that a long, long time ago, in the days of the Tsar, St. Petersburg turned thumbs down on the work of the dramatist, Anton Chekhov. There seemed no other place to turn in those days, and Chekhov had all but abandoned hope when the *Art Theatre* of then provincial and despised Moscow picked up his *The Seagull*, and made such a roaring success of it that Chekhov and the "*M'kbat*" were alike established forever. Naturally, the play has never left the theatre's repertoire. And that is typical of the Russian theatre: it keeps a good opera or play on its bill year after year, sometimes for more than a century.

That doesn't mean, however, that it plays nothing else. On the contrary, still another characteristic of the Soviet theatre

is that no company, having stumbled on a "hit" play, performs it every night for several years, as sometimes happens in New York. No, not even for several weeks. In fact, I saw no theatre offering one play even three successive nights. All theatres play repertoire and if, by way of solving financial problems, they show too much reliance on one of their best numbers, they are apt to get a sharp dig in the ribs from the *Literary Gazette* or *Pravda*. Only a few top theatres are now subsidized; the rest pay their own way. They must, nevertheless, also justify their existence artistically, and if they are too conservative about trying out new plays and writers, or if they court easy success with glittering but shallow productions, they may confidently expect a blast of criticism from people who mean business. The result of all this is such an abundance and variety of shows to choose from on any given night, that you are likely to suffer the fate of the bear who paced away the whole day at the crossroads because he couldn't make up his mind which banquet to go to.

I solved that question by going to them all! The big theatres and the little ones, the old and the new, the concert halls and the movie theatres and the performances in the workers' club-houses of factories and collective farms, the adult theatres and the *Komsomolskaya* (Communist Youth) and the *Children's Theatre* and the *Doll Theatre* of Obrastsov, one of the most remarkable artists in theatre-crammed Russia. I didn't miss the Russian equivalent of vaudeville, and though I never got around to the popular theatre of musical comedy in Moscow, I filled in that gap in—of all places—Stalingrad. The circus, too. Big cities have a permanent circus in the Soviet Union. The building in Tiflis, for instance, is a beautiful one and an architectural center of the town, overshadowed only by the mountain-top park-restaurant reached by the funicular. This season's attraction in Moscow was an all-woman circus. I missed that, but caught a visiting show in Stalingrad. One thing I didn't see and they don't have in Russia—burlesque or strip-tease. I did see, between theatres, more movies that I remembered to write down.

Perhaps you would be interested in looking at my own calendar of the theatre, not in its original chronological pattern but arranged in certain categories that readily suggest themselves in the Soviet Union. For instance, there are the classics, decidedly the first category. I was completely unprepared to find how much they dominated the theatre, the opera, the ballet. But there is no doubting the fact.

Who decides the predominance of the classics? The answer is—the people! You have only to see a Russian audience staying twenty minutes after the last curtain to clap and shout their appreciation of a performance they have seen time after time, to know that neither the government nor theatre managements decide this question. Foreign classics share the stage with the Russian; the first play I was to have seen in Moscow—through a misunderstanding, I failed to go—was Sheridan's *School for Scandal*. Among the plays I saw thereafter were: Shakespeare's *Othello* and *Comedy of Errors*, Victor Hugo's *Ruy Blas*, Lope de Vega's *The Dancing Master*, and Maeterlinck's *The Bluebird* which is put on not at the *Children's Theatre* as you might expect, but at the *M'khat* of a Sunday noon. Among the other foreign things available that I did not see, I recall Dickens' *Dombey and Son*.

The Russian classics were well represented on my schedule with Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, superbly performed at the *Art*; Chekhov's *The Three Sisters* which bores me stiff in any language; Gogol's *The Inspector General*, almost as broadly played as the Goldwyn movie of it with Danny Kaye; Ostrovsky's *The Forest*, also at the *Art Theatre*, though it is the *Maly Theatre* that originally produced most of the plays of this prolific nineteenth century writer and still produces them; and Gorky's *The Lower Depths*, which goes back to the beginning of the century but by its content is really a bridge to the revolutionary theatre.

In opera, there is very little but the classic. All the Western classics are performed—in Russian. I personally heard none of these; I preferred to spend my opera-time seeing the Russian operas that cannot be seen elsewhere, except that I saw Push-

kin's *The Queen of Spades* which is also performed in the West, where it is usually billed as *Pique Dame* and performed in French. The Russian operas I saw—*Prince Igor*, *Ivan Susanyin*, *The Khovanshchina*—are concerned with various phases of Russian history and have some contemporary political significance. *Prince Igor*, for instance, may well contribute to what is still a current task: the welding of a Russian national consciousness. *Ivan Susanyin* tells of a people's hero who, in the days when Russia was a prey to attackers from the West, agreed to guide a Polish army through the Russian forests and then led them to their—and his—death. It is easy to imagine how stirring it is to Russians who have not forgotten—as we have—World War II. Indeed, I found it stirring, too. *The Khovanshchina*—a family name—were the medieval political bosses of Moscow; the opera, left unfinished by Moussorgsky, was completed by Rimsky-Korsakov, and brought out in a new and spectacular production this year. It deals, in part, with a fight against crude religious fanaticism and its contemporary significance may be that, by implication, it argues against passivity and in favor of bettering life by conscious plan.

The ballet, as everyone knows, is a field in which no one can challenge the Russians. I saw the greatest of Russian ballerinas, Ulanova, dance three times: *Giselle*, in which she is at her best; *Cinderella*, which I include among the classics since it is the fairy tale unchanged, despite music of the Soviet era by Prokofieff; and *Romeo and Juliet* which I do not think a very good ballet. Yet I sympathize with the thought of the *Evening Moscow* reviewer who wrote after its first performance: "If the Montagues and the Capulets could have seen Ulanova dance Juliet, they would have ended their feud before it was too late." I had seen *Giselle* danced by a ballerina famous in our world, and I will not name her because I am going to say that after seeing Ulanova dance it, I decided that the other performance was thereby reduced to the level of amateur night at the local movie house. Remember, I do not speak as an authority on the ballet; but by the same token, a ballet must have special magic to move me to appreciation. And the

Russian ballet certainly did move me. Watching Ulanova dance in Leningrad, I saw her mother, said to be the greatest ballet teacher in the Soviet Union, also watching her from the first box. And between acts my interpreter, who was a ballet fan and had intimate friends in the ballet world, gave me the ballerina's thumbnail biography, which I pass on without vouching for the accuracy of the details.

Ulanova was not impressive in ballet school until the day of final examinations when she was suddenly brilliant. Rising quickly to stardom, she appeared likely to have a life story that was all easy success and no drama. Then catastrophe overtook her—tuberculosis. For three years she lived in one of the wonderful sanitariums the Russians maintain in the pine woods, until the dread disease was gone. But part of the Russian treatment for tuberculosis consists in stuffing the patient with extraordinary quantities of food rich in cream and butter and all that goes to ruin the figure of a ballerina. Aside from going three years without practice, time for all the muscles of the body to lose their toughness and tone and habit of ballet, Ulanova came back *fat*. People who know ballet will know what this new battle was like. But she defied the aphorism that they never come back, and looking at her slim figure and effortless dancing now, you would never believe she went through torment to achieve both.

So much for the classics. In contemporary drama, too, the Soviet theatre is richer than ours. I would divide the modern offerings into two categories: first, the more or less timeless plays; what may be called *Soviet* classics and contemporary foreign classics, plays that are sound and seem likely to survive; second, the topical plays, or propaganda plays if you want to call them that.

In the first category, I saw two current productions on whose durability I would gamble. One was a story about Lenin's home life in schoolboy days, *Family*. I found it warm, human, with characters well-developed and well-played. Indeed, the part of Lenin's mother was so brilliantly performed by a very famous actress, that the role of Lenin is definitely

overshadowed by it. *Unforgettable 1919* successfully brings to life the heroic moments of that year when the newborn revolution had to fight for its existence. Produced on the tremendous stage of the *Red Army Theatre*, the play has a battle-charge scene done as effectively as the movies could do it. The players charge with all their power, they really advance, yet they remain on stage for a long time. This illusion is achieved by a moving platform so that they are, as it were, on a treadmill. The action is seen through a transparent curtain, adding to the effect of battle-haze and space, and the great length of the theatre's stage helps prolong the charge.

Among the foreign things, aside from seeing a good production of Shaw's *Pygmalion*, I was most interested in American plays. I saw first-rate productions of Lillian Hellman's *The Little Foxes* and *Another Part of The Forest* (retitled: *Ladies and Gentlemen*.) In the latter, the actress playing the tart handled that minor role so brilliantly that she stopped the show every time she was on stage. These were plays I had seen in the original, and the Russian versions did not suffer by comparison even though the New York productions and performances were much better than average Broadway theatre.

It is not so easy to cover the topical or propaganda plays. I use the word "propaganda," here, in the sense it is often used in America: something that takes sides, an argument for or against something. The first live show I saw in Russia was a ballet, *The Red Poppy*. Its theme is the rising of the Chinese people against foreign imperialist oppressors—easily recognizable as Anglo-Americans—with the encouragement of the Soviet Union. The red poppy, handed to the Chinese by the captain of a Soviet ship, is the obvious symbol of that encouragement. Now this ballet is unmistakably propaganda, though you would be mistaken if you took it for this year's or last year's production; despite its extreme actuality, it dates to . . . I repeat, it is unmistakably propaganda, but it is just as undeniably art. It is one of the most moving experiences I have ever had. Danced by the ballerina, Lepishinskaya, (who is perhaps better suited than Ulanova to this particular role), it stirred me so that

I was simply not in the mood, a few nights later, for my first performance of the gentle *Swan Lake*, probably the greatest favorite of the Russian people. By comparison, *The Flame of Paris*, another ballet on a revolutionary theme, also failed to move me. In fact, I much preferred *Bayaderka*, an Oriental tragedy without a trace of social significance. But *The Red Poppy* will always stay at the top of my ballet list.

The topical plays that carry a message, are by no means on the level of *The Red Poppy*. I saw a great number of these, including *Alien Shadow*, *The House on the Side Street*, *Green Street*, *The Great Force*, *The Moscow Character*, and a comedy, whose name I have lost, by the leading Ukrainian playwright, Alexander Korneichuk, as well as several plays set in the United States, about which I shall speak later.

As theatre, these plays vary in merit from *House on the Side Street*, a piece of claptrap about supposed feats of Soviet intelligence agents in Japanese held Harbin, to *Alien Shadow*, Konstantin Simonov's well-constructed spy-thriller warning Soviet scientists to be on their guard against enemy intelligence agents. But by and large they are not very good. A whole batch of them clearly represents an effort to meet the last sharp public criticism which was to the effect that too many Soviet plays had strong "negative" characters, that is, bad people, generally individuals who retained the selfishness, the self-centeredness of human character under capitalism, while the "positive" or typically Soviet characters (sometimes a Communist organizer, for instance) were weak and characterless on the stage. In *Green Street*, *The Great Force*, *The Moscow Character* and the Korneichuk comedy, this criticism has been evaded by not having a *villain* at all! In reality, neither do they have characters—they have only types. The conflict in these plays is between two Soviet types: the basically good fellow who has gone a little wrong, and the still better fellow. The former made great contributions to Socialism in the past, but now he is holding back the wheels of progress by sticking to methods that have become outmoded however successfully he used them



in the past. Or, more simply, he has become too conservative. In a much used Soviet phrase, he "employs too small a measure" and opposes another, more up-to-the-minute, Soviet type who says the factory should take a bigger quota. In the Korneichuk play it is not a question of material production but of the proper attitude of a Soviet citizen: the conflict is between a surgeon who has the right attitude, and the head of the hospital who has developed very bossy manners ("bureaucratic tendencies," is the usual Soviet term) and is, in brief, too big for his britches.

You can see, in such plays a straining to serve Soviet society, to make the theatre a help in getting the job done. But after seeing quite a number of plays, films, and stories of this kind, I think they are still rather primitive. With due regard to my marked limitations as a dramatic critic, I would risk a general criticism: a conflict between good and better is not convincing in the theatre; the conflict has to be between good and evil. It has also to be a conflict between real live people, definite *individuals*, not types, or stereotypes.

Of course, if you claim the right to make such criticism, you can't logically turn around and holler "purge" when the Russians themselves start blasting their playwrights and theatre people! Thirteen or thirty years old, the Soviet theatre is a child—a vigorous giant of a child—and the parents are working as hard and as gropingly as any parent anywhere to bring their child up the way he should go.

These observations apply equally to the topical plays set in the United States. I did not see *The Law of Lycurgus*, said to be simply Dreiser's *An American Tragedy* with a "propaganda" angle, but I saw how the Russians treat such matters. *The Voice of America* is a direct attack on the American ruling circles whose policies are reflected in the broadcasts called by that name. By no stretch of logic can the play be called "anti-American," for its heroes as well as its villains are American and the heroes are specifically identified with the majority of Americans, while its villains are the few—the men of the House Committee on Un-American Activities, the conscious

advocates of a "preventive" war on Russia. The same thing can be said of *The Missouri Waltz*, a factually accurate play about the famous events in Kansas City where the Prendergast machine arranged for the theft of a mass of incriminating documents from a safe in a public building. In this play, prophetically enough, the local boss was slain by gangsters—months before the actual killing of Charley Binaggio in Kansas City! Both plays end with the progressives bravely preparing for a long fight, one they are certain they will win.

By far the most interesting of the plays in this "American" group—and like *The Red Poppy* one of my most moving experiences in the Soviet theatre—was *Snezhok*, or *Snowflake*, in the *Children's Theatre*. Since children don't care for the over-subtle, the play isn't. "Snowflake" is the affectionate, even tender, name a group of American schoolchildren give a Negro child in their class. A factory-owner from the South, his fearful little snob of a daughter, and a toadying teacher who hopes to become principal of the school, introduce violent race prejudice into the school. Snowflake is framed, arrested, beaten. How those white-pinafores Russian schoolgirls wept as Snowflake told his story! How the theatre vibrated with angry whistles and screams of, "Get out you rat!" as the bad teacher did his dirty work! How quickly the sunshine of the children's smiles made rainbows through their tears when the factory-owner's workers went on strike and all the good people in the play rallied around Snowflake so that you knew he would finally come out on top!

The theme of mistreatment of the Negroes is a major one in all Soviet discussion of the American question. And in their discussion they are too kind to us: I wonder where in the United States you would find a school where the majority of teachers and students would so readily accept a Negro socially, and where, incidentally, a lone Negro could be as unselfconscious about his position as Snowflake is in the play? There is a very popular children's book on the same general subject, and I found that it, too, was unrealistic and over-optimistic in failing to acknowledge and indict the everyday racism of the

average American, not just of his rulers or of the Southern white.

It is painful to have to skip on without talking about many of the other things I saw and heard in Moscow: "mixed concerts" that gave me a chance to see leading artists and scenes from plays, operas and ballets that I had not seen on their "home" stage; large choral groups, symphony orchestras, the *Moscow Gypsy Theatre* and a wonderful Korean troupe that came to Russia in June, to sing and dance and play old Korean folk instruments as well as modern Western symphonic music. Here are three things you must not miss in Moscow, but I can't take time to tell you why: the *Igor Moiseev Folk Dancers*—I wish I had a movie of their Ukrainian finale; the *Red Army Ensemble*, magnificent choral singers and dancers; and Obrastov's own solo numbers in "*An Ordinary Concert*."

Nor can we give the movies the space so important an art medium deserves. The first movie, I saw, incidentally, was a film in the *Stereokino*, one of three small houses in Moscow showing stereopticon films. The advantages of movies in depth over flat photography, are so obvious that the future of the movies surely lies here. The effects are particularly startling when an object, a pole let us say, is pointed at the audience (or camera). The impression that the object really projects several feet into the auditorium is so strong that you want to go up and touch the pole. The special screen on which these films depend, however, is still in an experimental stage and I found I suffered great eyestrain during the showing. I saw some interesting things there, though, especially a Soviet-made version of *Robinson Crusoe*. There are also newsreel and cartoon houses in Moscow.

One of the movie theatres I went to oftenest, was the *Metropole*, which has three separate auditoriums, the Red, Green and Blue rooms, with a different program in each. The American style continuous performance is unknown in Russia; you buy reserved-seat tickets ahead of time and wait for the beginning of the showing you are to see. While waiting, you may sit in a waiting-room auditorium with its own little stage,

where there is sometimes entertainment to fill in the time for the impatient movie-goer. Or, you may have a snack, for every Russian amusement place (including theatre and opera) has a buffet serving soda pop, beer, French pastry, salami and caviar open-sandwiches (which are called *bouterbrot*, obviously derived from the German for butterbread, but how it came by that name I never learned) and ice-cream. Or you may go to the reading room where current newspapers and magazines are available. If you are not a good sitter-and-waiter, Russian theatres always have big rooms for between-acts strolling. There you may either join the crowd circling around a great hall or examine the photographs of the theatre's noted present and past actors and performances until the bell rings for the beginning of the play or movies. In the legitimate theatre these facilities are an especial blessing, for the Russians do not shrink from five-act plays and you are in the theatre from 8 p.m. until midnight or later.

Old and new Russian feature films I saw, included *Kuban Cossacks*, a gay, tuneful musical in color, that was showing at all leading movie houses when I arrived; *Alitet Takes to the Hills*, a weak transfer to the screen of a fine novel about the impact of the Soviet revolution on one of the Arctic peoples; the *Fall of Berlin*, a color-film in two feature-length parts, the most important of a number of postwar films in which documentary material has been woven into a fiction story; but it is the documentary story of the war that remains the chief asset of this film; *The Russian Question*, which was also very successful on the stage and is really on the American question; so also is *Plot of the Doomed*, dealing with the post-war international political struggle in the Eastern European countries liberated by the Red Army; *Tale of the Siberian Land*, an old musical, and *Alexander Popov*, which sets forth the story of Popov's work on which the Russians now base a claim that it was he and not Marconi who invented the wireless.

A number of foreign films were shown in Russia during my stay, but I did not notice any American ones. *The Bicycle*

*Thief*, an Italian film showing in New York when I left, turned up in Moscow and made the rounds; I saw a Hungarian film about new problems and new opportunities for women in the new Hungary and I recall one Czech, one German and a number of French and Viennese films. All of these were doubled into Russian except a two-part new French version of *The Count of Monte Cristo*.

In general, I found the featured movie offerings disappointing. As a Russian movie fan who considered Soviet films right up to World War II the world's best, I thought the current crop suffered from some of the same shortcomings I remarked in the topical plays. But the documen-taries, of which they make a great many, often full-length and in color, more than made up for any disappointment I felt in the features. They ranged from *Lesnaya Bul*, (Forest Life) a fascinating account of the life of a beaver, through visualizations of the tremendous development of the great Central Asiatic Republic of Kazakhstan, to an excellent pictorial account of the mighty afforestation program now being carried out throughout European Russia. If there were any way of showing these documentaries widely in the United States, I would devote my energies to, that rather than to this book! For they tell the same story and bring their proof right with them!

Of course you might like the things I didn't and be bored by what I liked. No matter. We would agree that the Soviet theatre is an impressive cultural institution, and one of the more interesting things in Russia. We might also agree in being a little surprised that it is, on the whole, so much like it was before the revolution. I think that if we revert to our little game of "if you were Stalin," we can explain this, too.

If you were Stalin, you would try to utilize everything to speed completion of the mighty tasks you had undertaken. But just because there was so much to do, and so much that had to be changed in order to do it, you would not change anything that didn't have to be changed. If you did, you might find that you had disrupted the old without supplying something new to take its place. Now the theatre is obviously one of the

things that can wait for time to change it. It's true they do try to make use of the theatre for their big job of changing human nature; some of the plays I have discussed are part of that effort. The occasional heated public discussions and bouts of self-criticism indicate that they would like very much to make the theatre *more* useful in this respect. But they do first things first.

There is an obvious first thing you would have wanted to do on the morning after the revolution, and that is, for the first time to make the magnificent productions and tradition of the Russian theatre available to the whole Russian people. It had been open only to the well-to-do, to the urban intelligentsia; now let the workers and peasants see the show. That meant another building job! You must build club-theatres in all the factories; see that the theatre got to the country; establish theatres and opera houses in every republic and autonomous area in the language of the republic; set up movie studios, too, in every one of those separate "countries" of which your great country was made up, and distribute projectors and screens so widely that every farmer might, for the first time in Russian history, get a glimpse of the larger world, the world of culture, that it was now your job to bring to a dark people.

Stalin did all those things; if you go there, you can't fail to see them. In the Stalin Auto Plant in Moscow, I went to the workers' theatre in their huge club building, to see a "mixed concert" ranging from numbers done by the stars of the Moscow operetta to Shakespearean numbers by a famous actor, Mordvinov. In Georgia, in a village among the vast expanses of newly planted tea-bushes, the movie on view that night was one of the best films produced in Tashkent, capital of the Central Asian Uzbek Republic. In Stalingrad, my first night, I was too busy to make arrangements to attend a professional performance, in the tractor factory's club-theatre, of Balzac's *The Stepmother*. In Moscow, I once attended an all-Tatar concert. There were Tatar singers, dancers, musicians, poets, actors from the Tatar State Opera, and Tatars who were connected with the leading theatres of Russia. This is, mind you, one

of the smaller national groups in the Soviet Union. In Tiflis, capital of Georgia, I saw a visiting Sukhumi company (one of the Tiflis theatres was performing in Sukhumi in exchange) play, in the Georgian language of course, a play called *The Valley Chief*. I chose it because it was rich in Georgian history and folklore, but I was sorry I had not also gone the night before when the bill was Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. Like the Tiflis and Sukhumi theatres, the great companies of Russia and the other republics hit the road in the summer. The best theatre of the Ukraine played Moscow and Leningrad this summer, but above all, these companies get out where tens of new millions may get a chance to see the best. Nor is this the whole story. You cannot grasp the extent to which that first job of spreading the theatre has been carried out unless you look at the amateur theatricals of the Soviet Union. Georgia has a population of only three and a half millions all told, but it has over six thousand amateur theatrical groups! Now multiply this by the scores of language groups in the Soviet Union and add the Russian Republic itself and try to imagine what it means in the way not only of acquaintance with dramatic literature but the search for plays. No wonder you have to go not to France but to Russia to see Hugo's *Ruy Blas* and not to the remote corners of Spain but to the remotest corners of the remotest nation within the Soviet Union, to see Lope de Vega; and it was in Russia and in Russian that, for the first time in my life, I heard one of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* publicly recited. It was from a new translation by Samuel Marshak, a translation that won him a Stalin prize this year.

The development of the cinema industry is even more obviously a product of the revolution. There was little enough in the way of Russian films before 1917 but nothing at all for the non-Russian speaking subjects of the Tsar. Leading Georgian film people told me that exactly one feature film in the Georgian language had been produced before the revolution and another begun but not finished. The two movie houses the capital then boasted, showed an occasional Russian film and

some early French ones along with Charley Chaplin and Fatty Arbuckle. Now there are movie houses everywhere, and 175 feature films have been produced by Georgian studios. You run into Georgian films all over the Soviet Union. In Stalingrad I saw a kind of epic film about a Georgian national hero of the seventeenth century, Georgi Saakadze; another Georgian film, a series of little stories strung together on the thread of a Georgian folksong, was running in major movie houses throughout Russia in May and June. You might find this less surprising when you learn that Georgia is a land of a very ancient civilization and pre-biblical cultural tradition, but the same things have been done in Central Asia and the Arctic where the work started among people who not only had no literary tradition of their own, but had no alphabet. They have one now; and they have their own writers and composers and produce their own plays in their own theatres and their own films in their own studios, and all in their own language. In Tiflis, where there are many Kurds and Abkhazians, and Ossetians and Russians, and Armenians, I heard *Daisi* (*Sunset*) a really excellent opera, full of Georgian folklore. It was sung in the Georgian language, of course, except that that night the leading feminine role was sung by a great star of the Kazakh Republic—in her own language! Yesterday's nomad Kazakhs not only have a culture and create art works of their own, but they are acquainted with and translate into Kazakh the best things of their neighbors and of the Russians and of other Soviet peoples.

This language question is one of the most interesting aspects, incidentally, of the moving picture industry. I visited the Ministry of Cinematography of the U.S.S.R. and had an opportunity to ask all the questions I wanted to. And the one thing that gave me the strongest feeling of the task they faced in getting all these media to the far corners of their immense federation, and the extent to which they have accomplished that task, was the fact that they "double" virtually all pictures. The best pictures produced in Russia, a certain minimum each year, are doubled into scores of languages so that they are available to every sizeable group in the Soviet Union—in its own lan-



gauge. A still larger number is doubled into the major languages—the languages of the sixteen constituent republics. But by the same token, all the major productions of each of these sixteen republics and of the lesser language groups and autonomous peoples, must be doubled, too. And not just doubled into Russian but into all the other Soviet languages. So it is double and redouble: the machinery and personnel for doubling is an important element of film production in every republic if not in every studio.

Double and redouble! I think that just about sums up what you would have had to consider if you were Stalin. Your problem would have been one of simple arithmetic: to multiply the resources of the Russian theatre—say sixteen times sixteen times—to create the present Soviet theatre. Apparently Stalin was not bad in arithmetic.

## PART III: SO BIG THE JOB

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### CHAPTER XII

## Norms for Heroes

IN A BARBERSHOP in Tbilisi, I got my wants tended to between a few awkwardly pronounced words of Russian and a few international gestures. The way I pronounced Russian was not embarrassing in the capital of Georgia, for their language is distinctly Georgian and their Russian is usually pretty markedly the Russian of foreigners. They start learning Russian in the second grade, and their ten-year schools (one I visited, at any rate) are eleven-year schools, the extra year emphasizing Russian. They also hear the Moscow radio going all day in Russian. Yet Georgian is their language. All subjects in school are taught in Georgian. Their plays, movies, books, newspapers and own radio broadcasts are in Georgian. It is the official language and the actual one. In fact, they are *not* "Georgians;" our name "Georgia" comes, like the Russian Gruzia, from the Iranian *Gurj*—infidel, unbeliever, the Christian as the Moslem sees him. Their own name for themselves is *Kartveli* and their land is *Sakartveli*—the land of the *Kartveli*, of which there is ancient mention in the classics. Their capital is not Tiflis, as we and the Russians know it, but Tbilisi, meaning (in Georgian) "warm waters." I suppose there is not only lots of mispronounced Russian but lots of mispronounced Georgian spoken in Tbilisi, since there are a great many Ossetians, Abkhazians, Kurds, Armenians, Azerbaijani, and even Arab-robed Uzbeks, aside from the numerous Russians, in the city. Two of the

four employes of the barbershop, for that matter, were Armenians.

Like all barbers of all lands, they were very conversational and they were not at all discouraged by my practically no Russian. The radio was giving out, at the moment, some football scores (soccer football), so that provided the first topic. Had I seen the game yesterday in which the Tbilisi *Dynamo* team pretty well slaughtered the Moscow *Locomotives*, five to one? Yes, I had. One barber, who knew I was American, then asked me if people attended football games in my country in such numbers as they do in the Soviet Union, and I said yes indeed. This was a great surprise to the other barber who thought I was Czech and for some reason thought there was no football in Czechoslovakia, though there, as throughout Europe, the game is soccer. At any rate, he asked: "Do they play football there," and my Russian was only equal to *drugoy futbol*, other football, a pidgin-Russian which everybody understood to mean a different kind of football game. The first barber shook his head understandingly, and remarked, "*Narod ochen liubit Rugby*." And I was all puffed up with pride at understanding a whole sentence—"Your people greatly love Rugby,"—but pride goeth before a barren vocabulary, and the best I could do was to repeat my good old, *drugoy futbol*, with a brilliant *Amerikansky* as an afterthought. Even a barber couldn't see his way around the barrier of my two-words-for-all-occasions, so that er 'ed it.

Barber Number One now asked Barber Number Three (who had been silent throughout) for *Pravda*, specifying the issue with the two solid pages on the linguistics discussion. He got it and sat down, from time to time reading a passage aloud. Then my barber, in the time-honored manner of barbers, would stop shaving me to enter into vigorous debate about the matter, waving the well-stropped razor about in a manner that took my mind off linguistics and made me look to the safety of my tongue. Yet even then it occurred to me that I should like, sometime, to make a tour of the United States in search of a barbershop where the small-talk is on the science of linguistics!

The truth about Russia is made up of just such simple things as may be learned even in barbershops in the Soviet Union. The trouble is that most of the stuff written in the United States about Russia is read by people who, of course, don't know these everyday realities. They are unable, therefore, to distinguish fact from fiction. Let me cite, by way of example, a story I ran into just after my trip to Georgia. It was from the Helsinki correspondent of the *New York Times*, reporting a wholesale "purge" in the neighboring Finno-Karelian Soviet Republic. He gravely explained that "faraway bureaucrats" in Moscow had arbitrarily saddled the poor soil of that land with the high quotas of the Ukraine, famous for the fertility of its black earth. When the land failed to meet these foolish demands upon it, he said, the "bureaucrats" covered themselves up by punishing the hapless local bigwigs. Now it happens that you cannot spend much time in Russia without learning that that couldn't happen! Nothing is less possible than such an arbitrary assignment of quotas. I had just studied the actual workings of the quota system at the dirt-farmer level in Georgia, and I want to tell you about it.

This particular story really starts two or three minutes after I first arrived in Moscow. In the Intourist waiting room at the airport, I saw an electric kettle. Somehow that both amused and intrigued me. We always think of the Russian sitting around a samovar. Now as I went along from day to day, I just didn't see any samovars; I'm sure they haven't altogether disappeared, but there are probably more of them in the old-brass-and-copper shops on New York's lower East Side, than in all Russia. The Russians have, nevertheless, remained enthusiastic tea-drinkers. Yet up to the time of the revolution, fewer than two thousand acres in the whole Russian Empire were planted to tea, and there was one dinky little factory to process it, I discovered. Russians bought their staple brew abroad, just as we do. In the Moscow, however, I saw big stores devoted to the sale of Soviet-grown tea, tea from Azerbaijan, tea from Uzbekistan, tea, above all, from Georgia. The author of *Across the Map of the U.S.S.R.*, N. N. Mikhailov, writing

in 1948, said there were thirty factories and by 1950 would be 150,000 acres in tea.

Upon my arrival in Tbilisi, therefore, I immediately asked that I get a chance to see the tea-industry from top to bottom. The gracious Georgians quickly put me on the overnight train that goes to Batumi, on the Black Sea. In the morning, as soon as we were washed up, the conductor brought us glasses of steaming hot Georgian tea from a samovar in the compartment next to ours—the first samovar I had seen. And in mid-morning we reached our destination, Natanebi Station, perhaps an hour short of Batumi. This is the heart of Makharadze Rayon (district), in its turn, the heart of the Georgian tea country. Some 15,000 acres are under tea in the district and we had decided not to go to a great State plantation, with its own tea factories and experimental farms, but to visit the largest *collective* farm. The weather turned threatening, however, so I proposed that we skip the biggest and compromise on the *nearest* plantation, the Beria Collective Farm.

It was sprinkling when we got out of our automobile at the very corner of a vast expanse of green, rounded bushes, of hedge-like stiffness, each about the size of a peony-bush. The workers pick in the rain unless it gets very heavy; their oil-skins and boots are right beside them, ready for an emergency. As we took the few steps necessary to bring us to the tea bushes, our guide, the talkative and rapid-talking chairman of the farm, gave full and useful answers to the preliminary questions I had put:

This was China tea. Tea is a sub-tropical plant and requires normal rain, a good deal of moisture. Cold is bad for it. This was virgin soil, which means that when the government had prepared the way by planning and study, collection of varieties and so on, they first had to clear the land. A few pioneers of Socialism, therefore, started the actual tea-planting on a small scale. By they had eighty acres in tea as compared with their present 1,075. Of this latter figure, one hundred and twenty acres are in new tea, that is, tea planted in and not yet yielding. For the tea-bush does not give "fruit" until

its fourth year when it yields from five hundred to a thousand pounds of tea leaves per acre. A full yield is obtained only in its eighth year, when twelve thousand pounds per acre or more may be gathered. After that, the life of the bush is so long that they have not yet had to worry about replacement; indeed, it is said there are tea-bushes in China seven hundred years old!

By this time we had reached, and been presented to, a young woman deftly picking leaves from a bush and putting them in a basket. This was Tarejan Takidze, who wore the decoration of a Hero of Socialist Labor. I watched, but my untrained eye could not see any difference between the few leaves she picked and the many she left untouched. Well, that's the art, I was told. The bush blooms in October and you begin picking about May 1. This was the beginning of June and they had already got two thousand pounds per acre; July and August are better months than June and before they stopped picking, about November 1, they expected to get another eleven or twelve thousand pounds from each acre. In this long picking season, the tea-farmers work like farmers everywhere, from dawn to dusk. It is a work for sharp eyes and sure fingers, for if you pick the leaf on the exact day it has reached its readiness, it may be worth (if it is the best quality leaf and bush) four rubles a pound. If you do not pick it until the following day, its value may be barely over one ruble!

If you ask how Tarejan Takidze became a Hero of Socialist Labor, you know in advance that the answer will be "high production." And if you ask what she did that's different from other workers, you're sure to get a formula with two clichés: she obtains her "results" by "technique." She was rather shy in our presence whereas the chairman had to be firmly dissuaded from answering all the questions I put to her. Nevertheless, I soon discovered one main thing: she is not just a tea-picker, a kind of work-horse with fingers. She is an able tea-cultivator. Like other members of the collective, male and female, she has one strip of land that is her responsibility; she tends it year after year. I asked to be shown how much one person cultivates and the boundaries of Tarejan's strip were pointed out: she had

fourteen rows of bushes on one field about a hundred yards wide. It is an all-year-round job, too. During January and February, with the aid of machines, the soil is cultivated around the bushes. Tarejan loosens the soil under the bushes by hand and adds phosphorus. Beginning in February, she prunes the bushes, and this too is largely hand work. Beginning March 15, she adds sulphur, continuing this until April 1. Constant cultivation to prevent weeds instead of waiting to eliminate them after they have grown, continues even after picking begins. Starting June 10, when picking is already in progress, she fertilizes again with sulphur, five to six hundred pounds per acre.

It is all this preparatory and auxiliary work that enables her skillful fingers to pick the amount of tea that wins medals. Last year she picked eighteen thousand pounds of tea leaves on an acre and a half. During May, this year, she had already picked twenty-five hundred pounds and no one on the farm doubts that she will reach her target. But what is her target? Well, Tarejan won her Hero title in 1949 and now wants to win it a second time. To get a second award, a second "leg" so to speak on the permanent title, you must keep the Hero-pace for three successive years, whereupon, by the law of the land, a sculptor will shape your bust in bronze and it will stand forever in the town, village or settlement of your birth! Tarejan has kept the pace and this year is eligible for the coveted recognition. And, you may be certain, she will then go on to strive for the rare title of three-time Hero of Socialist Labor whose bust must stand in the Moscow Hall of Fame!

But to return to the *first* time she got the Hero title, which carries with it, by the way, the Order of Lenin: who decides whether a worker merits the honor or which ones merit it? What is the system of selection? The answer is, that it is really a system of self-selection. A target is set and if the worker reaches it he qualifies for the title. On June 1 and 2 most newspapers were wholly given over to publishing the tables containing these targets for 1950. They were issued as an order of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R., and

there were separate tables for every food-plant, and plant grown for industrial use, that you can think of, and separate quotas for each region, too. The worker who raises millet in a given region, looks at the corresponding table and sees that if he harvests so much per acre on not less than ten acres he will win the award called "For Distinguished Labor, For Labor Glory." A little higher average on a larger area will give him the right to the Order of the Labor Red Banner; still higher figures are set for the Order of Lenin, and, finally, a larger yield per acre on a larger acreage, wins the Hero title with accompanying Order of Lenin.

Now if you watch the papers, almost any day, you will see on the front page the announcement of an order by that same Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, concerning the awarding of the highest of these decorations to one or more workers. The order names them, gives the place and how much they raised, what crop, on how much acreage. For example: K. P. Sarsanya, who is already the holder of a Stalin prize, is awarded the title Hero of Socialist Labor for gathering 8,359 kilograms (roughly 18,000 pounds) of green tea leaves per hectare (2½ acres) on four hectares (ten acres). T. A. Kupuniya, a second Order of Lenin (as she is already a Hero of Socialist Labor) for 9,057 kilograms on six hectares. The Tbilisi paper, *Dawn of the East*, published in Georgian-language and Russian-language editions, carried these announcements among twenty such awards. It also reported that a total of forty other workers, on this occasion, received the Order of the Labor Red Banner and seventy-two got the Medal of Labor Glory.

A tea-cultivator knows that if he wants to win the title this year, he must set aside at least one and a quarter acres on which he will lavish special care to get at least 2.4 tons of leaves per acre from it. That is the "norm" fixed this year by the government. The form in which the target is set, has a special meaning. It is not necessarily the worker's total production for the year that determines the award, as you see; it is his production on a certain part of his land. Now why isn't the award in terms of overall production? Why is it in terms



of the individual worker's "experimental farm," so to speak? The reason is that they want something *more* than increased production. What they are really after, is to make the *process* of Soviet tea-culture more scientific, to raise the *level* of Soviet agriculture and industry as a whole, to increase the possible product of man's labor beyond anything now known to man. The goal, the great Soviet goal, to put it another way, is to speed the golden age when a very little work by all will satisfy all the material needs of man, leaving him free to spend the rest of his time just living!

This is what spurs Tarejan Takidze on as money cannot. (She makes far more than she needs). This is what makes possible great movements such as Lydia Karabelnikova's "economy" system and Cherkassova's volunteer reconstruction movement. A great goal is a morale-builder that petty hecklers will never understand. It is well understood in Russia. The various honors and awards are part of a system for enlisting the workers in all-year-round voluntary and conscious efforts, not just to increase the quantity of Soviet production but to raise its quality, to improve the methods of production. Toward this end, Tarejan is engaged in "Socialist competition" with all other tea-growers; her group competes with other groups; the thirty brigades on the farm are in competition, the farm with other tea farms, the factory with other tea factories, and whole industries compete with one another. You can make more money than you can spend by just raising as much of everything as possible. But if you strive to become a Hero of Socialist Labor it is because you want to speed the golden age, you want to make a contribution to the common welfare, you want to be a part of a great cause!

The Hero of Socialist Labor does not have to wait for heaven to get his reward. He earns a lot of the good things of life, enjoys great honor, and sees his own life and that of his fellows changing for the better under his own eyes. Tarejan Takidze, for instance, was born in 1921, one of six children in a poor peasant family. They lived right here from the beginning of this collective farm                      and helped create the tea industry.

It was no easy life; Tarejan became a fulltime worker, when she was fourteen (and hence still goes to school three nights a week to make up her schoolwork as well as to take courses in agro-technique). But how rich they have all become since then!

Take her own earnings. For May alone, she was credited with 110 labor-days; in other words, she got about four days' earnings for each calendar day. This came to 3,700 rubles in cash and a half-ton of grain from the farm; for the farm has, in addition to its tea-land, some thousand acres under rice and cereals and another thousand in citrus fruits. Last year she received 31,000 rubles pay and a 7,000-ruble bonus. Each ton of tea above plan is worth fifty thousand rubles, a third of which goes to the individual producer. Tarejan and her family live well now by any standards; by the standards of Tsarism, of the days before collectivization, fabulously. They have a six-room house built ; her father, now 70 works when he pleases; they have their own allotment of two and a half acres on which they grow tea, citrus and grapes, for themselves and for the market.

The farm, which has 4,000 people in all, in 822 families (or "courtyards," as they say), has only 1,200 workers, the rest being schoolchildren and old people and non-productive workers. Yet it is very prosperous. Income from tea last year was twelve million rubles out of which they paid a tax of 300,000 and a share to the Machine and Tractor Station serving all the collective farms of that area. There was additional income from grain and fruit. Fifteen per cent of the money went into a building fund—we saw a new administration building under construction, and they are also building larger power stations. The rest of the money is divided among the farmers according to the number of workdays earned by each.

I visited the farm's usual assortment of Soviet facilities: six nurseries, three schools with forty-eight teachers, two medical stations with four doctors and six aides, a ten-bed hospital, a maternity hospital and a pharmacy. (Before the revolution there were none of these things, not one doctor, though there

were four churches). I also found them constructing a new 300-watt radio station to reach their own collective farmers whose homes stretch twelve miles along the village road after the fashion of Georgian as well as Russian villages. They live well, they eat well. Twice that day, I had local food more familiar to my Midwestern palate than Russian food was; it included fried chicken and hot cornbread with plenty of butter, though there were also such typically Georgian dishes as cold chicken in nut sauce.

Each family's own "extras" include the fruit trees in every yard; every farmer may have two cows of his own and two or three pigs. The collective keeps 870 head of large cattle, 110 horses, 120 pigs, and bees, chickens, ducks, turkeys.

Last year the workers on this farm got, for each labor day earned (which might be many labor days for each actual working day): twenty-eight rubles and ten pounds of cereal grains, plus rice, shares of various other farm products in kind, and their own products privately raised and consumed or sold. With the cash 62 families rebuilt and extended their homes, 37 built new ones at a cost of thirty to forty thousand rubles each; thirteen families purchased automobiles, many bought furniture. The culture of the community has risen rapidly; 220 families—more than one in four—sent children to schools of higher education last year—universities, agricultural institutes, the Academy of Arts, the Polytechnical Institute, the Medical Institute. There is a library, with 22,000 volumes, open from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. In the 400 seat club-theatre a feature movie, *Journey to Arzrum*, about the poet Pushkin, was shown that Tuesday; Wednesday, another movie, *Tale About the Siberian Land*; Thursday, *Romeo and Juliet* was being staged; Friday, an Austrian film, *Children of the Danube*, that was also showing in Moscow; Saturday, the People's Song and Dance Ensemble of Batumi; Sunday, an Uzbek feature film. Last year they spent 230,000 rubles to "radiofy" the village so as to get Moscow programs; 250 homes now have sets and the others will get receiving apparatus this year.

Their present low-wattage local station functions from 8 to

12 p.m. and from 6 to 8 a.m., playing records, putting on the collective's own 46-man (and woman) chorus, and giving talks of interest to farmers.

Even from this little glimpse of their standard of living, it will be evident that the "faraway bureaucrats" did not "arbitrarily" transfer to the Soviet Union the primitive hand-labor and low-productivity, that go with tea-culture in Asia. On the contrary, they deliberately planned to grow tea in a modern way. As early as        they started experimental work in Georgia and set up institutes to study all the processing problems involved, as well as to develop, from Chinese and Indian varieties, plants that would grow as desired in each given region. I visited the Experimental Tea Factory of Anaseulski, and the Tea Institute there, and one of the district's eight tea factories (three more are under construction) where each four pounds of green leaves yields one pound of packaged tea, but I am going to say nothing more than that this is a strictly modern industry, constantly seeking means to substitute machines for the human back. In the Institute, there are over 150 scientific workers and right now, on the State Farm in the same district (with its own complete scientific and production apparatus) they are trying out the fourth and likeliest-looking model of a machine that will eliminate hand-pruning of the tea bushes.

If they have introduced ultra-modern, scientific tea-farming and manufacturing into a country that used to farm on the level of scratching the earth with a stick, they have done that as an integral part of a plan to make a modern, more or less self-sufficient industrial country out of Georgia.

In Western Georgia there is the big tea industry; in Eastern Georgia, a very important wine industry; all over Georgia, the wonderful resorts have made it a tourist country; but the basis of the republic's economy is now heavy industry. Georgia has steel mills and auto factories as well as consumer industries.

Now what do you think of a newspaper wiseacre who can dismiss men with the vision to do this job, as "faraway bureaucrats"? I have spoken before of how much harder the Russian

road has been than our road after the American Revolution. But if we are going to compare the two situations, we have to note that the Soviet system required, as a matter of principle, that all their numerous peoples—those of ancient culture and those truly primitive—be treated as equals and made a part of the development and cultural change initiated by the revolution. They educated and enlisted the cooperation of their “Indians” whereas we rolled right over ours. Today some of those very “Indians” of the Tsarist Empire, are among the “faraway bureaucrats” in Moscow. Indeed, Joseph Stalin is a Georgian.

Stalin is, by the way, strikingly portrayed in leading Soviet feature films, by another Georgian, Gelovani. I say Georgian, and it may be objected that you cannot compare the Georgians of 1917 to the Indians of 1776. Very well. In the Georgian Museum in Tbilisi, there is a whole room devoted to one strange Georgian hill-tribe, the Suani. At the time of the revolution, the Suani still lived a strange, patriarchal, pre-historic kind of life. All their ways were different; their furniture, their clothing, their agricultural implements and animal traps were peculiarly their own and rarely primitive. It was easy to believe that, in their mountain fastness, they had remained completely untouched by outside ideas for centuries. There were only three thousand people in that Lost World, yet the “faraway bureaucrats” in Moscow and Tbilisi took thought for them, too. A highway now goes into Svanetia, the land of the Suani; a bus travels the road. There are schools, doctors, libraries, movies, nurseries, agronomists. The road leads out, too; this handful of hillfolk has representatives of national standing in various spheres of Soviet life. Stalin’s film “double,” the actor Gelovani, is a Suani!

As backward as the Suani, in a different way, were the Jews of Georgia, for it is said there have been Jews there for 2,500 years or more. There is a Jewish Museum in Tbilisi and it had a porter, an old man who had grown up in one of the curious Jewish villages of Georgia. When he was sixty, he suddenly felt he could no longer resist an urge forgotten since childhood

—the urge to paint. He began to paint, from memory, the intimate details of Jewish life in that village of his youth, and in the next four years he painted fifty pictures and then he died. The painter was honored before his death and after by the Georgian government and people and his paintings hang in the museum to tell the story of a strange and barbarically ignorant people, a people marvellously like the people of the Bible, stubbornly clinging to the ways of the pre-Christian era in the twentieth century.

It is the story of a vanished people, for special measures, special schools, special attention to the particularly unfavorable situation of the Jews, were ordered immediately after the revolution, and today the Jews are as other Georgians. This, too, was the result of awareness and direction by Georgian and Soviet leaders.

No, the people who plan in the Soviet Union, do not sit “far away.” They deal with the actual variety of life, not with arbitrary blueprints. Even the norms for Hero of Socialist Labor show that. If you look at those tables I mentioned, you will see that there are “norms” not just for individual collective farmers but for tractor drivers, brigade leaders, farm chairmen, agronomists, district administrators—everyone involved in the modern, mechanized, socialized process of Soviet agricultural production. This is planning that deals with people, and just as no hill-tribe was too remote to be reached, so no individual worker is overlooked. Indeed, the individual is the starting point of national planning. Far from jotting down arbitrary figures, it is as if the planners had added up the production of each worker, each farm, each area, to get a national total. Then they raise that figure to get this year’s norm. But again, not arbitrarily. They raise it by carefully studying the work of the Tarejan Takidzes and calculating just how many workers can be aided to do, next year, the things she did this year.

These are the facts of Soviet life. They fly in the face of the speculation that idle dreamers in Moscow simply cook up the figures that go into their five-year plans. And these facts suggest something else that has a direct bearing on our chief

interest in the Soviet Union. They suggest that Soviet leaders are completely absorbed in this peaceful work and that all the talk we hear about Russian determination to achieve world domination is just talk. You can see nothing to support it in Russia. They are doing too big a job in too big a land to have time for war and conquest.

## CHAPTER XIII

# Cossacks of the Steppe

WHEN AMERICA was a young and lusty pioneer nation, many cultured visitors came from Europe and then went home to write books about their disillusionment. They found the rough and still backwoodsy people of the United States too coarse and crude for their refined tastes. Like Dickens' *American Notes*, their books always seemed to focus on the little backwardnesses of Americans. No doubt they actually saw the things they described with such distaste—the spitting contests, target-shooting with chewing-tobacco-juice at a distant cuspidor, for instance. But looking backward, were they justified in making such a big thing of American manners? I think not. I think they were obliged to tell the truth about America and factual accuracy is not truth. To have seen the truth about America they would have had to look beyond the crude housing and indelicate manners. What was there in America that would cause it to become what it did in fact become twenty, fifty, a hundred years later? That would have been the truth.

That is the kind of thing, then, we ought to look for in the Soviet Union, if we are going to tell the truth. So I will tell you a strange thing I saw in the dry steppe a hundred miles north of Stalingrad. I saw heavy crops standing in fields that had not seen rain for many months past. There were green and weedless fields of wheat and rye planted last October and this was May and no rain had fallen since the planting but the



earth was black and unthirsty. I knew this to be traditional drought country. I had already experienced the dust storms that blow through Stalingrad from the deserts below and beyond the Caspian Sea. Even on our way to this Cossack farm district we had travelled all day on roads whose yellow dust strangled us. We saw mirages, the first I had ever seen. We rode by meagre land, surely unfit for the plow, and gophers darted across our path every few seconds. The only growing things were the aromatic herbs and flowering weeds of the steppe. But now in that same boundless, rainless, treeless steppe, in land no different than the land we had passed through all day, land fit only for the camel, we found green crops growing out of black earth.

So it's irrigated, you may say. Well, let's not waste time: it isn't. It gets no water from any source! Walk to the edge of the field. Where the land is untouched by the tractor, you'll find it dusty-white and cracked, true dust-bowl land. There is one possible clue to this mystery: the trees. I said this land was no different from the steppe about it, but there is evidence that they are busy making it different. There are thick belts of new-planted trees bordering each cultivated field. They are rather thickets than woods, and it is evident that they are not survivors of "natural" forests but young growth. By their even arrangement and pattern, they clearly follow some plan.

Ask the Cossacks and they will tell you these trees are part of the Stalin fifteen-year afforestation plan. And there is no better spot in the whole Soviet Union to see what that plan means than on the thirty-seven collective farms in this district. For here they had a head-start—they began their planting before the war. During two days at the Dyeminsk Machine and Tractor Station, one of four such stations in the district, I visited most of the fourteen farms it services and talked to the people who started the planting and are still doing it. Varvara Inyarkina, who headed the first planting team on the collective farm called Bolshevik Banner, still heads the tree-program. And somehow, in terms of one woman, and of one farm composed of just eighty-two families, I could understand what had

eluded me when I tried to grasp the plan in its impersonal magnitude.

I had seen picture-maps and posters everywhere showing the boundaries of the area to be wooded by according to the "Stalin fifteen-year plan," a government decree issued October 20.

The whole territory from the lower reaches of the Danube to the Ural Mountains, an area five times the size of Great Britain, was to be crossed and criss-crossed by "shelter belts" of man-made forest. Before I left Moscow, the first detailed report on progress of the plan showed that two million acres had already been planted with more trees than grow in the whole of England! Already, beyond the borders of European Russia, the ancient Central Asiatic cities of Samarkand and Karaganda, the one a traditional goal of caravans bringing exotic freights, the other a brand-new city created by the revolution, had been surrounded by such woody barriers to the hot dry winds of the desert. It was all completely fascinating—but as remote as Samarkand and Karaganda.

Philip Fetisev, chairman of the Bolshevik Banner, helped me bridge the gap. Born right on this farm, fifty-two years ago, he had not only seen great changes but been greatly changed. His was a poor peasant family with eleven children. All worked for the *kulaks*. By walking four miles to school and four miles home he got four years of education—between jobs as a shepherd. At thirteen he went to work in the fields as a hired hand. And what a miserable life it was for hired laborer and peasant alike! Poor, ignorant, unorganized, the same eighty-two families, more or less, cultivated just half the six thousand acres now tilled. With horse- and ox-drawn plows, they did not dig deep and so gave the weeds a head-start. Worst of all, these fields were divided as many ways as there were families. "They had no common defense measures," said Fetisev, "just as if weeds wouldn't travel from one man's field to another!" And year after year they planted wheat, rye, barley, millet, never anything else. They planted half the land for two or three years, then let it lie fallow while they planted the other half. If it rained, they got perhaps five centners of grain per hectare. When it was

dry, often several years in a row, they were lucky to get two or three. To come out of a drought with seed was a victory; to ask for enough food was a dream.

The revolution couldn't automatically and immediately change all that. For one thing, the people who would lead the change were busy fighting. Fetisev did not return from the front until 1921 when he plunged into the work of remaking life. He was variously secretary of the village council (Soviet), engaged in organizing peasant cooperatives, head of one such cooperative, and head of the village Soviet. Then,

he went to agricultural school and returned to take the chairmanship of the Bolshevik Banner, a post he has held ever since, except for eleven months at the front, from which he returned badly wounded.

Fetisev's back-to-school movement had coincided with the arrival of the first tractor on this farm. With it came a more scientific system of crop rotation, the six-field system, it was called. He learned what it meant and how to follow it. By October 1908, a groundwork had been prepared; the people had seen for themselves what science could do, scientific theory and "agro-technique," deep plowing, fertilizers, sound rotation, greater variety of cultures, all possible only on bigger fields with machines to cultivate them. So now a new decree introduced the first modest tree-planting program along with a much more complex system of cultivation, the ten-field system. In its technical aspects, the new system put more emphasis on grasses—one called *lutzern* is very popular—which supply the earth with "green" or natural fertilizers, and on "technical" crops such as sunflower (whose seed produces an oil much-prized hereabouts for cooking) a certain fibrous plant used for textiles, a coarse kind of tobacco called *makhorka*, and sugar beets. The Bolshevik Banner also raises silkworms; I saw them feeding on oak leaves as well as the more familiar mulberry-leaf diet.

That is no more than the technical aspect of the change; it is the way the change was affected, but it is not the change itself. A richer life for the farmers, that's the change. They

have their own cows for milk and butter, their own pigs and poultry. They grow their own vegetables and a great variety of fruits. The law requires them, in fact, to grow some fruit trees on their own land and the farm itself has twenty acres in orchard; four other farms have their own fruit-tree nurseries and there is a major one for the whole district. A family with two or three workers earns five to six thousand rubles in cash per year and thirteen to twenty pounds of grain for each workday earned. The same family is likely to get an additional three tons of grain as a bonus, and it can sell this on the open market. It also gets shares of everything else the farm raises, for instance a hundred to a hundred and fifty pounds of sunflower-seed oil.

Put in terms of farm bookkeeping, the result can be expressed very simply: this revolution in technique and in social organization of the Cossack farms, meant crops of twenty and thirty centners per hectare instead of five. No wonder the ordinary, still poorly-educated Cossack farmer was eager to learn more and willing to put in hours of voluntary labor to safeguard what he had.

And it did need safeguarding, for one terrible enemy remained from the olden days—drought! That was where the tree-planting program came in. In its broad aspect, the program meant big forests networking the country and modifying the pattern of rainfall. For the local farmer it was a direct fighting measure. Even that first decree called for trees that would manufacture water. Of course trees don't manufacture water; they consume it, enormous quantities of it. And while we are dealing with riddles, let me mention another: I said these crops get no water, but of course you know nothing can live without water. What I meant was that they have had no rain, no water brought to them by irrigation, no secret relief from underground streams. The key to both riddles is—snow.

When there was nothing but the unlimited steppe, the fierce cold winds of winter piled up all the snow in the hollows and valleys and stream-beds; the spring thaw took the water wherever it pleased nature and maybe nature's system served some

purpose of nature's but it did nothing for man but rob him of water he would long for all summer. Then, in summer, the hot, dry winds baked the exposed fields and turned their surface to dust and blew the dust away while the grain withered on the stalk. The new program decreed an end to the anarchic rule of nature. Border your fields on both sides with wood, it said. Then the wood will break the force of the wind in winter, the snow will stay on the field and when the thaw sets in, the water will soak into the field. With the aid of deep plowing and of careful cultivation—these farmers work the land seven times before they plant and on the last working they now pull a combination large-and-small plow that turns under the much-worked top six inches of soil and brings up from underneath a fresh, moist layer of six inches in which the seed is planted—you will have water even if it doesn't rain. Then, in summer, the wood will break the force of the wind again and keep it from drying up and blowing away the soil on the fields.

So in the spring of 1939, Varvara Inyakina took a team of nine volunteers and set out to plant trees. They rode horseback pulling cultivators and did much of the work by hand. There are only eight spring days, incidentally, for tree-planting, and very few more in the only other time of the year for this job—the autumn. Yet in 1939 they planted six acres and in 1940 twenty more. They plant thickets rather than woods, planting oak in a tangle of acacias, elm and ash trees which protect the slow-growing oak in its early years. Planting in this manner, the number of trees is fantastic: the first two years they set out almost two hundred thousand trees!

The war, of course, interrupted all such labors of peacetime that looked to the future. Then the first years after the war were lost in getting back to where you were before the war. So just ten years after the first decree, a new and more ambitious one—the decree known as the Stalin Fifteen-Year Plan—was issued. It set out, region by region, the quotas for tree-planting throughout lower European Russia. But it carried the central objective of the tree-planting, the search for water, a

long step farther—the planting quotas were coupled with a similar detailed plan for the construction of ponds and reservoirs by the millions.

At the Bolshevik Banner Varvara Inyakina has resumed planting trees and Fetisev has sent his tractors and men out to build dams so that they now have five big ponds where there used to be trickles of water escaping from the land, and the ponds make swimming pools and they stock them with fish to further enrich their diet and their recreation. Little water now gets away from this farm or any of the others. The tree-planting goes much faster, too. In the last two years alone Varvara's team has planted more than sixty acres, bringing the farm's total up to a hundred and twenty—more than half a million trees planted on this single farm of fewer than one hundred families! Moreover, next spring they will plant another twelve or thirteen acres and that will complete their program—fourteen years ahead of schedule!

The work goes faster now because there are machines. At a nursery I saw a machine that scooped up whole rows of young oaks, with enough soil to protect their roots. Then they are all ready for the new tree-planting machine that has done away with the hand-labor. With fifteen people and a tractor, this machine plants a hundred thousand trees a day—twenty-five acres of wood. Without the machine, that is a day's work for two hundred and fifteen people. Besides, this means that they plant, if not full-grown forests, at least sizeable trees so that from the day of planting the field already enjoys some protection.

It is so all through this district. At the machine and tractor station I got the corresponding picture for the fourteen farms. They must set out over 2,600 acres of woodland by more than ten million trees. They were two-thirds done and, like the Bolshevik Banner, would complete the job next spring. In the town of Novo Annyenskii, the district center, I got the figures for the thirty-seven farms of which these fourteen are part. The district must set out nine thousand acres in woodland—thirty-seven million trees. They will all be through in

so that the district as a whole is thirteen years ahead of schedule!

The same is true of the ponds and reservoirs they must dig. They have finished eleven new ones and enlarged and restored twenty-two more. They are now working on dams looking toward use of the water for irrigation and next year will do the remaining sixteen ponds called for by the district quota. All this planting and damming and digging and the subsequent scientific exploitation of the water thereby controlled, is possible only because of the five-year plans, only because of the transformation of Russian economy from a backward agrarian one to a modern industrial one. The Dyeminsk Machine and Tractor Station is the local crystallization of the change, for there are the machines without which none of this would be possible.

Some four thousand persons live on those fourteen farms, and that means that there are no more than fifteen hundred to two thousand workers. They cultivate sixty-five thousand of the ninety-thousand acres there. They are able to do it because they have 105 tractors ranging from twenty to eighty horsepower; 43 combines; 70 sowers; and plenty of skilled operators so that there are two drivers and two mechanics per machine in season.

Men are more than machines and more important than machines. For scientific farming you need scientific farmers. Now I am not a farmer. I have given you a very sketchy idea of the techniques employed here, but I cannot say how it compares with the very best farming in America. Still, I have seen a lot of rural America, and there are certain things that I can say in all safety. Scientifically-trained farmers in America own or manage farms. The mass of agricultural workers do their jobs without need of science or interest in it. In Russia, something unique has happened; they have created scientific farmers on a mass scale.

There are innumerable evidences of this, proofs that the average farmer understands something of the scientific theories behind the improvement in his life and work, and is trying to understand more and more. I was impressed by little experiences

such as my meeting with the new leaders of the Seventeenth Party Congress Farm in their typical Cossack village of Solovyev Vikhlayevski. They showed me all these things I have spoken about—their cultivation, their tree-planting, their beautiful lake with a surface of two hundred acres and across the lake a great forest, one of the new State Forests. They took me to dinner in their homes and showed me their own private yards, orchards, gardens. They were, as I recall, the chairman of the farm, the chairman of the village council and the farm agronomist. And what impressed me was that they are natives of this district, all the same age—twenty-seven years old—and all fresh out of agricultural school.

It is all very new and so only the most recent crop of specialists could be local men. But the standing of the experts as a whole, Cossack and non-Cossack, the sheer number of trained men, tell the story of the transformation of this backward land, the story behind the miracle of the waterless crops. Every farm has its own agronomist, in addition to which, the machine and tractor stations have an agronomist for each two farms and four more on the station staff. There is also a large district staff, and still more experts attached to other district and national institutions located here.

The head agronomist of the district, Ivan Gusev, a fifty-five-year-old peasant from Saratov who became a fulltime worker at the ripe age of eight years, was one of that handful of men who found their way to an agricultural school before the revolution. He spent six years there and so was a qualified expert at the time of the revolution. For years thereafter, he organized collective farms, machine and tractor stations, and then was assistant director of a gigantic state wheat farm on the lower Volga until 1937 when he came to Novo Annyenskii to head a program for the creation of more specialists of all kinds. Subsequently he became head agronomist and, since the war, he also heads the district Department of Agriculture. Gusev is a Hero of Socialist Labor and Stalin prize-winner. It is typical of the Soviet approach that this man, a very big frog in this little puddle, felt the need to, and did, go back to school!



In 1950, by correspondence, he completed the most advanced agricultural courses obtainable in the Soviet Union.

The workday of Mark Zhulinski, senior agronomist of the Dyeminsk station illustrates the complete change in local life. He begins at 8 a.m. (not the traditional daylight of muscle-farming) and farms by telephone and radio all morning. He assigns all the machines and reassigns them as they finish tasks and answers questions that arise in the course of the work. Brigades in the fields have their own two-way radios with them, so that they are never out of touch. The afternoon he spends in the fields, for every crop has its rigorous rules—how far apart the rows must be planted, what space between each two plants when they have been properly thinned; and there are new experiments always under way. For instance, they tried thinning part of one of the thickets and it has now raised a question as to whether they will really ever clear them and make open woodland. For opposite the thinned portions, the crops have suffered. I could clearly see a difference in color and health and quantity of the rye. And the weeds were more numerous—the wind had been at work here. Then there are the fields where they plant wheat and the perennial grass called *lutzern* together; the wheat must be harvested this year; for the next two years they will harvest *lutzern* without new planting, before rotating the field. Another experiment to be watched is the planting of grain in the fields of oak seedlings. The grain can be harvested even a second and third year before the oaks have grown enough to be endangered by the blade of the harvester. Meanwhile, the grain protects the young oaks from the hot summer sun.

Even the bare biographical facts about two generations of Zhulinski's, helps illuminate the Soviet scene. Like Fetisev of the Bolshevik Banner, Zhulinski worked as a shepherd as far back as he can remember; like Fetisev his schooling ended at the fourth grade. Night study after he went to work, at the age of fourteen, in the Odessa Accumulator Factory, and post-revolutionary opportunities in a hydro-technical school, in the Kiev Agricultural Institute, and in the most advanced school of all at

Kharkov, prepared him for his present work. Neither he nor any of his four brothers and sisters were "put through" school or would have got there without the revolution. Now compare the situation of his two daughters and one son. The oldest daughter graduated from the Stalingrad Agricultural Institute and is engaged in scientific work there now. The other daughter graduated from the Timiryazeff Academy and is now off on a scientific expedition in the Stony Steppe under the auspices of the Dokuchayev Institute. The son is now in his fourth year at Timiryazeff, in the department of selection.

There are many things here that add up to a highly-organized, scientific farm community. This district has a State Experimental Field of some 250 acres which cooperates closely with the farms. Its job is to develop and test new varieties before trying to put them into mass use. *Saratov Rye No. 1*, a variety now widely used in the Dyeminsk area, was tested here; it gives a twenty per cent higher yield than the *Yeliseyevski* variety that preceded it, but it is, in turn, being replaced by *Volzhanka* which seems to give three to four *centners* more per hectare than *Saratov 1* in good years, and in dry years, when *Saratov 1* dropped to fifteen centners, *Volzhanka* gave twenty-two at the experimental base.

You may have heard of the famous branched wheat, whose stalks develop heads so much heavier than any other wheat that there is no comparison, and whose individual grains are heavier than several grains of any other wheat. Of course there are always possible disadvantages as well as advantages to any new variety and the Russians proceed cautiously with this very hopeful variety. This year, for the first time, it is being tried out in this district on approximately two acres. Another experimental wheat is in a more advanced stage, however; they are trying it on a thousand acres.

Another scientific establishment in the district is the Williams Agronomical Base, with thirty to thirty-five persons experimenting on two thousand acres. It tries out new methods of cultivation, such as effects of different combinations of fer-

tilizers and new grasses on the soil. It also has its own mechanical base for experiments with machinery.

Besides these, there are the four machine and tractor stations, a horse-breeding farm, a State Farm, some four hundred acres of State Tree Nursery with ten million trees, a Forest Defense Station and a whole system of agricultural schools that embraces the entire farm population. For higher agricultural education, they go to Stalingrad and beyond. In Novo Annyenskii there is a school for what they call "middle" education, the District Technical School, operating from September to July 1 each year for four years, with practical work on the farm in summer. It has three hundred students who will graduate as agronomists and steppe-wood specialists. Everybody goes to school. The agronomists conduct classes all winter on every farm. These began as study-groups called "100-pood circles," that is, farmers whose target was a crop of one hundred poods per hectare, or roughly a ton per acre. The famous "discussion on biology," that brought all the top biologists, geneticists and agro-scientists of the Soviet Union together in Moscow in August 1948, stirred up the whole farm world and reshaped those schools. It led to a big meeting in Stalingrad where important people from various ministries and from the regional administration reported on the Moscow discussion and proposed measures to profit by it. Following this, a series of meetings was held in Novo Annyenskii: leading people of the district, and of the farms, and guest speakers took part. The theme of the meetings in this district, as throughout Russia, was: *We want to conquer drought*. One of the resulting practical measures was the broadening and increasing of the work in the farm schools, which were then renamed "Michurin Schools."

There are courses suited to farm executives and the most active farmers; there are courses for tractor workers, for brigade leaders and for each class of farmers according to its actual chief work. Animal brigades for instance, have lecture courses by zoötechnicians; growers of the coarse tobacco, *makhorka*, get specialized courses on this culture; the tree-planters get instruction from a district tree specialist attached

to the machine and tractor station. Also, in Novo Annyenskii there is now a once-a-week class for the two hundred top people of the thirty-seven farms. Conducted by the teachers of the fulltime technical school with the assistance of all the leading specialists of the district, it covers, in abridged form, the program of the Agricultural Technical School, so that all these experienced administrators and organizers will be equipped to lead the next drive to still more distant goals.

One of the things I most wanted to find out was: do the rank-and-file farmers know or care about science as such? I can answer that with all assurance now. They certainly do. It is hard to find a person above the age of eight who does not know the names of Dokuchayev, Williams, Michurin, three great neglected Russian agricultural scientists of Tsarist days who were enthusiastically adopted by the Soviet government. They know not only their names but their ideas. In the execution of the fifteen-year plan, for instance, when schoolchildren go out on expeditions to gather acorns (how else would they manage to get the *billions* of trees that they must plant to fulfil this plan?), they also gather bucket-loads of dirt. They are following the teachings of Michurin, as now propagated by Lysenko. Start a young plant in its own environment, is the idea. By putting a trowelful of this earth in the hole where the acorn is dropped, you let the seed start life in the very soil where its parent grew to be a mighty oak. The lady who kept the improvised hostel at Dyeminsk, had a dining-room almost smothered in indoor plants, grown in accordance with much-discussed principles of these three agricultural scientists. Yet she was not a farmer but a hospital worker.

Scientific theory has transformed the land, the economy, the people. Or, rather, it has enabled them to transform themselves. For the nature of the integrated theory by which the Russians guide agriculture, is such that it can be effective only if the people themselves take part in actual scientific work. A good deal has been written in the United States about the great "purge" of geneticists, but I looked a little way into that and got something enlightening on this very question. I read six

hundred odd-pages of stenogram, the verbatim text of the debate in August 1948, and, as you will recall, interviewed Lysenko without great profit. But coming across a volume of selections from the writings of Michurin, whose principles Lysenko put forward against those championed by the formal geneticists, I found the book very interesting reading. And when I was through, it occurred to me that none of the speakers in the debate had made a useful summary of Michurin's actual work (rather than his principles) and so they had not pointed out to me what I thought the most illuminating aspect of it. Therefore I will stop to say a few words about Michurin.

Michurin grew trees. His father, his grandfather and his great-grandfather before him grew trees. He is famous for the many new varieties of fruit he developed, yet there are "Michurin pears" in Russia that are not his work but the work of his great-grandfather! When the virtually penniless Michurin recognized, in 1875, that no other work could make him happy, he started a nursery. It would not be wrong to say that there was not a decent piece of fruit grown in Russia at that time, except for a relative handful from the Crimea and the Caucasus. Even these were "only wretched imitations of those we still obtain in enormous quantities from their real homelands abroad," he wrote. And he made that observation not in 1875 but thirty-three years later, when he had discovered how Central and even Northern Russia *could* grow good fruits—only he had also found out that the Tsarist government didn't have the slightest interest in such things. He worked all alone; visitors came in constant procession to his nursery; he corresponded with enthusiasts and scientists all over the Russian Empire. But by 1914 he was exhausted and had to close his nursery to visitors and stop answering letters because he had not the strength to go on. "I have done what I could; it is time to rest and take care of myself," he wrote.

He was sixty then, but he was mistaken in thinking his work had ended or that he had fought in vain. A few years more brought the revolution. Lenin himself called for all possible aid to Michurin and peasant-born President Kalinin twice visited

the nursery. Michurin added two rich decades to his lifetime of work and by 1904, when Stalin sent him a warm personal telegram of greeting on his eightieth birthday, not only had his town, Koslovsk, been renamed Michurinsk, but there were fruit orchards growing good fruit all over Central and even Northern Russia. Michurin had become a movement.

Michurin had taken no part in the revolutionary movement. He was not a Marxist in 1918 and I have not heard that he ever became a Communist. But there ran through his whole life-work a principle that seems to me the heart of Soviet science and planning: that the will of man is the decisive thing. He had faith in man, in man armed with science.

You can see that in the beginning of his work. He started out to make fruit trees obey him and grow good fruits in icy Russia. "We cannot wait for favors from Nature," he said. "We must wrest them from her." His opponents, and he had many even in those days when it was a private squabble and not a big national issue as it is now, said it couldn't be done; Russia's climate was just too severe for fruit trees. That's why they had such poor fruit and nothing could be done about it. The climate certainly *was* severe. One enthusiastic amateur horticulturist preserved his cherry trees through the winter only by tying them as flat to the earth as he could and completely covering them with earth; nevertheless, in their sixteenth year the frost killed them. Yet Michurin never was tempted to credit the doubters. He said that if the desired varieties had not been created, if kinds of trees that would give heavy yields of large, tasty fruits had not yet been developed, that was only because the right principles and techniques had not been discovered and applied. He flatly denied that there was any theoretic reason admirable fruit couldn't be grown in Russia.

His life-work was to discover and apply the principles and techniques needed. He took trees as young as he could get them or planted seeds and tended the young plants, transplanted them, cut off all the big roots if he wanted to induce a plant to develop a system of fine roots or the fine roots if he wanted it

to lean on big roots; he shaped the form of the tree, altering the leaf structure; he gave the tree extra nourishment when it needed it and found out at just what point each of these things had to be done to have a given effect. In sum, he learned with just what mechanisms the laws of nature were enforced in his locality, and then he was in a position to turn those laws to his own ends.

In the "discussion on biology" I heard much about hybridization as against sex-crossing but reading Michurin I did not find grafting and hybridization the heart of his work at all. The essence of his work, of his science, is the belief that you can compel a plant to grow the way you want it to grow by *training* it. Get the plant young and train it. Provide all possible aids toward development of the specific qualities you want and eliminate all the influences that will militate against such development. Know the plant as a whole and know how its parts (roots, bark, trunk, leaves) affect the whole and how controlled changes in them can be utilized to make the tree develop in the desired direction. Grafting, hybridization, are additional aids in this work, important aids, but training remains the basic concept.

There was a time when no Russian plum was available that would "keep" more than a month. A plum available in the fall months commanded a premium on the market so Michurin set out to "manufacture" one. No variety of plum tree in Russia had the qualities desired, so there was no *parent* he could have used to produce the sought-for plum by the natural method of sexual crossing. He nevertheless created the plum he wanted. And it gave seed from which you could grow trees that would always give such plums. He created hundreds of useful varieties.

But you can't, in general, take seeds from Michurin's nursery and plant them successfully just anywhere in the Soviet Union. Michurin did not try to grow universal plants. Quite the contrary; it is indispensable to an understanding of his meaning for contemporary Russia, to grasp one unmistakable concept running all through his work—that principles are universal, problems local. You have to apply his *principles*, not borrow

trees from his nursery. You have to use those principles to do the kind of work he did and develop *local* varieties that will give you the results in *your* climate and your *local* soils that he had attained by following those principles in his climate and the soil of his nursery. The principles and methods of Michurin are, of course, not confined in their use to fruits. They are valid for anything that grows.

This is important not just for its bearing on the scientific issues behind the conflict of the formal geneticists and the Lysenko-led Michurinists, but in order to understand how science has affected contemporary Soviet life. The need for *local* varieties means that every region has to do all the constant experimentation and development that Michurin did. Therefore, every farm has to have its well-trained agronomists and every single farmer has to study constantly and participate intelligently and millions and millions of them must go beyond that to do experimentation and conduct scientific observation on their own. That, in turn, means that these numberless part-time and full-time scientists must quickly pool their results so that all Russian agriculture may advance more rapidly. Michurinism, in short, means the kind of things they are doing at Novo Annyenskii.

You can't fully appreciate what they have already done unless you know what life was like in Novo Annyenskii thirty years ago. It was a land of ignorance, suspicion and fear. If you travel by train from Stalingrad, get off at Filonovo. You will then find you are not at Filonovo—it is a few miles away and has no railway. You are at Novo Annyenskii. In the 1880s when they built this railroad, it was to have gone through Filonovo. But the benighted Cossacks of Filonovo wanted no devils of modern machines penetrating their darkly ignorant world, and so Novo Annyenskii was substituted for Filonovo. But once you had all the necessary approvals and authorizations to lay a railroad, you couldn't think of going back through all that again to okay a change of one station; it was much easier to call Novo Annyenskii *Filonovo*. Chicken, you're a fish.

Not that Novo Annyenskii was more enlightened than Filo-



novo either in 1880 or 1918. The level of their farming, we have already seen. Their science was the religious procession and such Cossack superstitions as never getting on your horse or in your cart while in your own yard when going out for the beginning of spring sowing. You prepared for the season by throwing a flour-sifter up; if it came down topside up, that meant a good crop; otherwise, look for a bad year. This was their agricultural science at the very time men like Williams and Michurin were doing and publishing their remarkable work that could have saved Russian agriculture.

Not one person in the whole district had read any of that work. For that matter, it is certain that none had even heard the names. How could they? There was not one agronomist in the entire district. Although the district was then somewhat larger in area, its intelligentsia consisted of a handful of tenth-rate teachers, one lone doctor for the entire district, a few Army officers and officials. What an intelligentsia! Not one subscriber to one newspaper or magazine was to be found in this district. It goes without saying none was published here. There was not one library, one theatre, one movie house, one club, one public park, one athletic field or sports hall. But gin-mills—yes.

Look around Novo Annyenskii and even the small villages of the district now. Not counting the state farms and other institutions not under the direction of the district authorities, there are 158 agronomists, 285 teachers, 128 doctors and medical workers, 45 engineers. There are 48 elementary schools, various agricultural, technical, drivers' schools. One newspaper is published here and, of course, they receive all the newspapers and magazines published elsewhere in the Soviet Union. There is a district library of 125,000 books, a children's library of 45,000 to 60,000 volumes, a mobile library that carries 15,000 volumes into odd corners. Every school, every collective farm, has its own library in addition. The largest movie house was bombed out and they are now restoring it; there are two others. The State Farm and the machine and tractor stations have their own sound equipment and every farm has silent projectors,

radio, dramatic circles. We arrived in Novo Annyenskii on a Sunday in time to catch the end of a soccer game between teams of two of the district farms. Every one of the thirty-seven farms has a team and a field. Chess is an equally serious sport here. There is also skiing and horse-racing, Cossack style, in the hippodrome. Teams from all the farms compete in district cultural competitions, with winners going to Stalingrad for regional tourneys and some ultimately to Moscow. For instance, the district's best chorus, dance and dramatic groups went to Moscow and won some first places in all-Russian collective farm amateur competition. On a non-competitive level, I found half the young folk of the town dancing to the music of the local band in a new public park just before midnight one night.

The transformation in the field of health is just as complete. We stayed at the home of Dr. Alexander Ostrouma in Novo Annyenskii and our meals were prepared by his wife, a laboratory technician. He heads the Cancer Section of the Board of Health and told me about health facilities. There are twenty-five doctors in the ubiquitous polyclinic, four more in a railway unit, the customary children's services, a hospital with eighty beds and a new one with a hundred and fifty beds under construction. There is an anti-malaria station, a children's tuberculosis hospital, a prophylactic (preventive medicine) station with a staff of twenty. Well, you see what I mean.

There are people in America who want to reduce it all to a dollars and cents level. They would argue that the peasants' bellies are full and their backs well-covered and that's why they work. There are even more who won't concede that these farmers *get* food and clothing. But I have seen the things I have told you about and I am sure that the material level of life is constantly rising here. I am equally sure that you cannot explain the morale of the people I saw by dollars and cents, food and clothing. No, people who have seen civilization achieved in their own lifetime, are no doubt telling the truth when they say they work as hard as they can because they *believe* in what they are doing, believe in what they are building. And what

they say they are building is—a new way of life. They are convinced that if they keep right on, they can make life worth living, not just for themselves but for all men.

As a writer, I have some doubt about how well I have been able to transmit to you the living picture of the Cossacks of Novo Annyenskii. But as a man, I do not, at least, have to be ashamed of what I have related. For this story of green crops growing in unwatered fields under rainless skies, is not just a curious detail about some farms a hundred miles from Stalin-grad. It is a *truth* about Russia. It may even be *the* truth.

## CHAPTER XIV

# Bigger than Man

A MAN in Stalingrad said to me: "What kind of fools run the Voice of America? You know what they have been trying to tell us. They have been trying to make us believe that the new price-cuts are some kind of fake, that they do not really make life easier."

We laughed. If you were in the Soviet Union right after the third across-the-board price cut since the end of the war, you would laugh too. Only a man as remote from Russian realities as the proverbial man from Mars would have thought you could make effective anti-Soviet propaganda out of the price-cuts.

My friend continued: "There are many shortcomings in our life, serious ones." He made a gesture and with the expression on his face it told volumes about what one who had been through it all, an experienced propagandist himself, a journalist and editor, could find for ammunition if he were an enemy of the Russian people. "But these people understand nothing about our life, nothing about the Soviet people."

Yes, there are many "shortcomings" in Soviet life to write about if you are of a mind to. There are many crudities to trouble you when you are looking for the truth. I was startled, my first days in Moscow, by the wide disparity in standards of living I saw. There is not just a difference in clothing between the street cleaner, in her felt boots and quilted jacket, and the

thousands of members of the intelligentsia I saw on the Moscow streets she cleaned. The difference is in access to the amenities of life. Money still means quite a lot. An occasional beggar, a not too infrequent drunk, the survival of the tipping system in restaurants and hotels and stations, are all surprising to one who has unconsciously assumed that a revolution automatically erases every vestige of the old society and substitutes something of its own.

The common observation, as we remarked earlier, is not to be denied: there is everything and its opposite in Russia. But what is typical and what is true? You cannot tell the truth by a malicious recital of all the "shortcomings" you find, nor, for that matter, can you get off the horns of the dilemma by an "impartial" or equal selection of the "good" and the "bad" things you see in Russia. The "good" and the "bad" are parts of one process, the painful process of building something so new that the Russians cannot guide themselves by anything man has done in the past but must plunge ahead into the darkness of the untried, winning great successes and making whopping big blunders. It is all one story, the story of the future Russia in the process of becoming.

That is why you can tell the truth about Russia only by describing the process, never by dwelling on the crudities. The failures do not balance the successes; you can see with your own eyes that the Russians are leaping over their past. The achievements are typical, the achievements are the truth. You need that principle to guide you, for the achievements and crudities always go hand in hand.

Take the farms of Novo Annyenskii. The whole district is an achievement and the Russians are conscious of it. People come from all parts of the Soviet Union to see what has been done there, to learn how it was done, to go home and make bigger, better, Novo Annyenskii. Even Dyeminsk has had to set aside a small guest-house with two rooms and a number of beds, because so many visitors come now. Yet how crude the hotel! There is no running-water. The evening meal, eaten in the home of the woman who runs the "hotel" before and after

her full day's work in a hospital, was of ice-cold eggs and ice-cold very fat meat. How easy it would be to make a book about these "hardships" an American experiences in the Soviet Union (how often it has been done!) There are plenty of crudities. The doctor's fine new house in Novo Annyenskii had an outhouse, no running water, a fence of woven branches like all the other houses of the district center. By measuring all things with the yardstick of modern plumbing you can tell the story of Russia just the way the sophisticates of Europe used to tell the story of America.

The facts would trip you, however, even if you tried to confine the story to questions of accommodations, table, material comforts and manners. I could tell you that I was unable to eat that dinner of cold fat-meat and cold fried eggs. But I would have to add that I wasn't hungry in any event because I had just eaten a delicious meal in the home of the chairman of the Seventeenth Party Congress Farm. That meal and home also contrasted with my previous day's experience when I lunched in the home of another farm chairman where we were given forks to eat out of a common dish of cooked cabbage and had to use the same fork to dig into the bowl of fresh butter to butter our bread. That was an older man and an older woman. The home of the twenty-seven-year-old and his wife was different. It was a simple two-room house like the other, but it was spotless and tastefully decorated, just little touches to make it charmingly comfortable and to express some Cossack pride in Cossack life—and Soviet life. The chairman's wife was an excellent cook and the cleanliness made it possible to relax and eat your fill. Or gorge, if I'm going to be honest about it. So you see, even if you wanted to write about bellies and backs and plumbing and manners, you'd still have to pick out that which is typical of Russia in the process of becoming, not that which represents an unfinished job.

Someone may say, all those visitors come to Novo Annyenskii because it is a *model* development and therefore quite the opposite of *typical*. They would really mean that therefore it cannot be *average*. But that is not the question. The ques-

tion is, what is typical of the Russia now in the process of becoming? That is the question I have tried to answer in this book.

There are powerful people in our country who hate the Soviet Union. The press, a mighty big business in the United States, reflects this sometimes veiled but now more and more overt hostility. Consequently there is no use looking in the newspapers for an answer to the question I have formulated. They always seem to be asking a quite different question about anything the Russians do: Has it a vulnerable side?

Let me illustrate that. Right after I left Russia, the government announced a series of new projects of typically Soviet proportions. A series of hydroelectric stations on the Dnieper and Volga, one or two of them larger than any in the world, is to be built; a 700-mile-long canal, the Great Turkmen Canal, will be dug and by means of this canal the Amu-Darya River will be forced to abandon its present outlet, the Aral Sea, and flow into the Caspian Sea. Having taken command of these tremendous water resources, the Russians plan immediately to initiate the irrigation of vast desert and steppe areas in Central Asia, the Ukraine, and the Volga basin—that very country we have just visited.

Having just come from Russia, we know that the Russian people talk of nothing else than such projects. And so it is no surprise to read, in a dispatch by *New York Times* correspondent Harrison Salisbury upon his return to Moscow after vacationing all summer in America: "The number one topic of conversation and interest in Moscow is the government's vast new hydroelectric program. Reports describing various aspects of the projects are published daily in almost every newspaper. No visitor can converse with a Muscovite for five minutes without hearing about these gigantic schemes. These projects are described in the press as dwarfing Boulder Dam, Grand Coulee, Bonneville and Niagara. The Kuibyshev installation will produce ten billion kilowatt hours a year and irrigate 2,500,000 acres of land. Stalingrad is to produce ten billion kilowatts and irrigate fifteen million acres, while Amu-Darya

is designed to provide 3,250,000 acres of new cotton land and 17,500,000 acres of pasture land." \*

I cannot see how a member of the human race, commenting on this group of daring projects, can fail to remark the *human* significance of the program. It is *planning* instead of drifting; it is planning on a scale and of a kind new to history. It is *peaceful* planning. And it assumes a still larger program amounting to nothing less than the deliberate and purposeful creation of a world in which men will not passively observe the thousand ills the flesh is heir to. "I am the master here," Man cries out to Nature in announcing these projects. Assuredly there is nothing in that to harm us, and we ought to say: "Good luck! We hope you get it done by as you plan." In this time of our own war-hysteria, we ought all the more to welcome these projects as good news for ourselves. For, as Salisbury notes in another article of the same series, (*Times*, October 13):

"If the Soviet government is making available to ordinary citizens increasing quantities of items made from cotton, wool, leather, brass, aluminum and steel, it would appear the Kremlin does not anticipate requiring these basic materials for war-production at some early date. But most significant of all from the economic point of view is the enormous expenditure of money, labor and materials that the Soviet government is now putting into the construction and repair of purely civilian and entirely non-military facilities. So far as research can determine, there has been no changeover of the economy from its predominantly peacetime aspect to one of preparation for, or anticipation of, war."

Now let's see how the *Times*, the outstanding example of an American newspaper, richer in resources for newsgathering than any other, insistent on its claim to objectivity, handles this significant human event. In an editorial on September 4 the *Times* disposed of the projects without making any of the



observations I have noted above. The only conclusions the *Times* cared to draw, conclusions it said "Soviet commentators do not mention," were these:

First, the Russians wouldn't be building big hydroelectric stations if early large-scale use of atomic power were in prospect. So that takes care of Mr. Vishinsky, who "boasted" at the UN last November that the Soviets were using atomic energy for peace. Second, these plans, by their very size, "connote a very significant shift in policy. A decade ago the Soviet press was full of denunciation of 'Gigantomania,' " but these projects are even bigger, a "return to 'Gigantomania' with a vengeance." And here the *Times* darkly hints at heaven knows what ugly motives that drive the Soviet leaders to adopt plans they know to contain fatal flaws, plans that experience had already proved "uneconomic and wasteful." And, finally, the *Times* concludes that the "stress on irrigation is implicit admission" that the "much-publicized" Stalin Fifteen-Year Plan "is inadequate to solve the Soviet food problem."

Now all this talk about a "return to Gigantomania" is just nonsense. There has never been a time when the Russians were not working on stupendous projects as the central constructions under the five-year plans. Is the Stalin Plan, which the *Times* chooses to characterize as intended "to solve the Soviet food problem," smaller than the new projects? Let us look at it more closely. No one in his right mind would be likely to say that to afforest and control the drainage of all America between the Mississippi and the Atlantic Ocean, for instance, is a small project. The Stalin Plan territory contains 300,000,000 acres—it is about a third the size of the United States, holds one-third of all the collective farms in the Soviet Union and two thousand of its giant State farms as well as a population of 75,000,000. The plan calls for eight great forest belts adding up to more than a 3,000-mile length, and for planting local farm-field belts on five per cent of all farm acreage in the territory. The plan also calls for digging almost 45,000 ponds and reservoirs

Yet figures give a poor idea of the magnitude of the plan.

You have to formulate the vision behind it. What is this immense stretch of territory they have undertaken to alter according to their desires? Why, it is nothing less than Nature's very image of Russia—the steppe! When we think of Russia we think of the barren, inhospitable steppe stretching as far as the eye can reach. What deep psychological theories have been spun to explain the Russian character by means of the steppe! Yet here is Stalin, calmly proclaiming, "There shall be no steppe!"

Perhaps the *Times* would like to believe that this, too, is an act of desperation to impress the people, that it is a plan too big to be workable. But if we look at what we have just learned in Novo Annyenskii, we will realize that *Soviet plans are not launched until they have already succeeded in principle*. The main ideas of the Stalin plan—that the steppe could be afforested, that its resources in water could be controlled, that against a background of collectivized, mechanized, scientific farming, forests and reservoirs would immeasurably enrich Soviet agriculture and the life of the Soviet farmer—had all been tested at Novo Annyenskii and many other localities even before the war. A still larger idea of the Stalin plan, that it is possible to modify the climate of desert- and steppe-country and restore vast wastelands to production, had also been tested in an absolutely large but relatively small way. In Central Asia they had long been experimentally sprinkling the true desert with tenacious plants that bind the sand and begin to build topsoil. They had begun to halt the encroachment of the sandy desert upon the steppe. Their results told them that with the aid of floods of water that could be borrowed from distant rivers, the desert could be turned into pastures and fields and the sombre steppe into lush green country. That is why there is no question of failure of the afforestation plan or the latest projects. Like all Soviet plans, they have simply translated into a national program, with quotas for each region, the results already achieved in many areas on an experimental scale.

The local experiments, the early successes, determine the

timing of big Soviet projects. But the projects themselves have long been in existence. On November 25, the leading scientists of the Soviet Union met in the Academy of Science in Moscow. The hall was filled to overflowing and thousands of people milled outside, for the subject of discussion had excited the Soviet people, captured their imaginations, to a degree we Americans have never known. What they were discussing was no abstruse problem of interest to a few scientists only, but the whole program of remaking Russia. There were engineers, agriculturists, geologists, economists, physicists, chemists, zoologists, botanists; they broke up into panels holding separate sessions in the Electrical Institute, in the Geological Institute, in the House of Engineers. After six days they all assembled again and put their separate conclusions together into one plan that would accomplish the gigantic task set for them by the Soviet government.

They referred to their work as a plan for the creation of a future Greater Volga River, but if you followed the discussion you would realize that the making of this "dream" river entailed just what I have said—remaking the whole Soviet Union. Everybody knew that, for behind the speaker's platform at the very start of the opening session, there was a huge map of the Soviet Union which suddenly lighted up and showed the conferees what the Soviet Union must look like after three five-year plans had been completed. There were black lines showing dams; there were blue spaces marking the vast areas to be turned into irrigated fields; there was an intricate red network of canals and great green streaks of forests, and blue rivers shown rolling over dams into new lake-reservoirs, and green dotted lines of future high-tension electric lines and white lights of power stations and a brilliant cluster of lights marking the very Volga power-plants that are now put on the order of the day.

Only one five-year plan had been completed. Subsequently a second was finished and the war interrupted the third. After the war, a five-year plan of reconstruction intervened. The new plan will therefore be, in effect, that third five-year plan whose broad outlines were visible on

the map in the Academy of Science as long ago as November

A brilliant popular outline of the Soviet dream behind the plans, with a detailed description of the work of this very conference, has been available in English since when M. Ilin's *Men and Mountains: Man's Victory Over Nature*, was published in translation here. The *Times* would have us believe that the newly announced projects were cooked up to conceal the failure of the afforestation plan. But let us see what Ilin, writing, had to say about the Amu-Darya River, whose diversion is one of the new projects.

"There are two big rivers cutting through the desert. They both begin in the mountains, the Amu-Darya and the Sir-Darya. Valuable soil, soil where the best kinds of cotton, the finest varieties of grapes would flourish, lie barren because of the lack of water, while the rivers, surrounded on both sides by desert lands, flow uselessly into the Aral Sea."

Now there are plans to end that situation, he continues. "It is planned to take the water of the Amu-Darya all the way to Krasnovodsk through the desert of Kara-Kum," a distance of nearly a thousand miles. How? Well, "there was a time when the Amu-Darya River flowed into the Caspian Sea instead of into the Aral Sea. From the study of old manuscripts—Arabic, Chinese, Persian, Greek—historians have established the fact that the Amu-Darya has changed its sea six times during the last twenty-five hundred years, flowing now into the Caspian, now into the Aral Sea. The last time it left the Caspian and went over to the Aral Sea was in 1575."

Of course you can foresee the end of Ilin's story. Instead of waiting for the Amu-Darya again to change its course some centuries from now, they decided to build a dam and make it change its course at a time fixed by man. But in flowing through its old channel, it would cross a big slough and take years to make a lake of that natural basin. To avoid that and better control the river itself, "artificial banks must be constructed where are no natural ones." I need not go on; it is obvious that this is the whole project of the Great Turkmen Canal, not improvised but ready since just waiting a favorable

time. And so with each new project for the next five-year plan and even for many plans to come.

I heard of a postwar gathering similar to the meeting; again there was an electrified map to visualize the major ideas governing the next few five-year plans of Soviet building. And before I left Moscow, an engineer of considerable standing, Peter Davidov, gave a public lecture indicating the present status of the overall plan. In the lecture, he outlined his own detailed scheme for the execution of the most striking portions of the big program. His is but one of several proposed approaches to tasks still bigger than any now in work. Yet again an overflow audience resulted. And though no one detailed scheme, so far as I know, has yet been officially adopted, Davidov's lecture revealed how much progress has been made toward assembling the data that must be utilized by any plan finally adopted. He was able to give quantities of statistical information, engineering calculations, not available . He gave astronomical figures on the cubic tons of water that would be gained by each proposed measure. He talked about it all as one who knows that it not only can but will be done.

I heard about the lecture only when it had been given. That absence of Russian public relations I have spoken of, prevented my obtaining the details of the lecture. But they are certainly no closely guarded Soviet secret, for I talked to people who had attended and learned that foreign correspondents who speak Russian were there. There were also representatives of various embassies, Russian-speaking personnel, who took notes without objection. There was no reason they should not have done so. And by the same token there is no reason the *New York Times* should not know that such projects have always been part of the Soviet master plan for the conquest of nature. There is no reason it should not have known that these plans entail taking great rivers of Amazon- and Mississippi-volume that now flow wastefully into the Arctic Ocean and turning them around, so to speak, to make them flow south where they can render fertile whole empires of warm wastelands. The Amu-Darya is but the first to be compelled to obey this plan.

The Ob, the Irtush, the Yenisei, the Lena, are likely to follow when the time comes. Even in , the scientists who met at the Academy of Science proposed adoption of a scheme drafted by an engineer named Nikolsky to tap four great northern tributaries of the Volga, the Onega, the Sukhona, the Vichегда and the Pechora Rivers, for the indirect objective of feeding the distant, southern, Caspian Sea that was cut off from connection with the Black Sea many ages ago.

The details may change; the Soviet government may adopt one engineer's plan or another's; but the intention to force the earth to submit to man's will does not change. The work goes forward on that master plan, in the form of afforestation projects, irrigation projects, hydroelectric projects, desert-canal, year after year without fail.

Nor do the Russians think of their herculean labors in terms of eventually making themselves richer than any other nation so that they can strut and puff and yammer about a Russian Century as many of our leading countrymen are bragging about an American Century today. On the contrary, the Russians are always pointing out that the really big jobs, the jobs that will make their work seem small, are necessarily global. They cannot be accomplished by one nation nor can they be accomplished by international competition, particularly that most savage form of international competition called war.

That same writer Ilin, or Ilyin, I mentioned a moment ago, contributed an article running through two issues of the Moscow weekly *New Times* while I was there. The article was, in form, a merciless critique of some books recently published in the United States which more or less predict the doom of man on the theory that the soil of the world constantly declines in fertility and there are just too many people on earth anyhow. In refuting their pessimistic arguments, he pictured as wholly feasible, a series of scientific marvels a million years ahead of Jules Verne. Photo-synthesis installations could be established in both Polar Regions, he declared, to turn the Arctic and Antarctic into "areas of agriculture without plants," and manufacturing of valuable raw materials. With the aid of atomic

energy, man can direct some of the big African rivers into the heart of that continent and irrigate the Kalahari and Sahara Deserts. Australia could be rescued from droughts by tapping the plentiful subsurface water there; India could be rid of the famines of rainless years by harnessing the rivers that flow down from the Himalayas. In Peru, a few atomic explosions could blast a wide gateway through the Andes and let the rain-laden winds of the Pacific moisten the now walled-off and dry lands this side of the Cordilleras. Vast power-projects would work for man in many parts of the world and simultaneously alter the conditions that now bring him nothing but malaria, sleeping sickness and encephalitis. The ocean currents can be redirected, the winds controlled, the inner heat of the earth directed to melt the glaciers of Greenland and the Polar Regions—anything man wills *can* be done provided only all the peoples of the world work together to the conscious end of shaping their own destinies.

This is not just what the writer Ilin thinks. These are the thoughts of the Soviet leaders and the Soviet people. For the purposes of this book, I have no opinions as to the scientific validity of Ilin's earth-shaking dreams. It is enough to know that the Russians are preoccupied with dreams of peaceful construction and not with dreams of conquest.

We set out together, you and I, average Americans who know little about Russia and cannot speak its language, to find out what the Russians are "up to." And now we know—they are up to their ears in work. I can't see how we can fail to conclude from all this, that they want peace, that reasonable men could easily work out the terms of peace with them. Just stop shaking a stick in their faces. Just drop the myth that "it's the Russians" every time a Persian or a Korean, an Indo-Chinese or a Hottentot, raises his fist against some corrupt, cruel, oppressive native ruler who could not stay in power a day without the protection of British, French or Dutch imperialist troops armed by the United States. Drop all that, and I think there is no country on earth where government and people alike so uniformly *require* peace for the fulfilment of

their tasks and would therefore welcome it as much as the Russians would. The people talk peace, and things are just as quiet in the Kremlin where they are not mounting anti-aircraft guns in panicky preparation for war, but are only gilding the minarets of the old cathedrals and putting fresh green paint on the roofs and yellow paint on the walls.

We may as well face it, the talk of war comes from this side of the ocean. There are powerful Americans who would not welcome peace with the Soviet Union. There are Americans in high civilian and military office who publicly and privately advocate "preventive war" on Russia. An avowed "war of aggression," if you please. It is no use asking the Russians for "proofs of good faith" as a preliminary to negotiations—no Russians are going around talking about war on us. If we really want peace (as you and I certainly do, whatever the "preventive war" maniacs want), we had better begin by changing the climate at home. We need a climate of public opinion in which it will be less easy for a member of the President's Cabinet to call for a "war of aggression," a climate in which more men will openly assert the self-evident truth—that we are pursuing an aggressive, dangerous, wholly unjustified policy of hostility toward the Soviet Union.

There is one argument which is frequently offered as justification for our official policy and even for the policy of "preventive war." The argument runs that if we don't attack first, the Russians will attack when *they* are strong enough, and perhaps then take us by surprise. It is supposed to be an immutable Communist principle, the backbone of Soviet policy, that there must be an armed showdown. And if that is so, what more natural than that the Russians should pick their own time, and what could then be wiser than that we anticipate them, that we strike first even if we have to engage in a "war of aggression" to do so?

I think we are entitled to label this argument a criminal fraud on the American people. On the strength of what we have seen in Russia, on the strength of the evidence gathered at first hand, it is apparent that the Russians are *not* preparing



for an armed showdown. They surely hope for the victory of their way of life, but just as surely that victory has nothing to do with war. Victory for their way of life does not require the conquest of one nation by another any more than it requires the exploitation of man by man. They are not trying to conquer other nations. They are trying to conquer the loneliness of life. The Soviet challenge is no challenge—it is an invitation. We, the vast majority of Americans who want peace and want the good things of life, won't get either by going along with the men who have laid out our present foreign policy. We will get them only by exercising our Constitutional right to criticize that policy publicly, to condemn it, to demand that it be scrapped in favor of a return to the policies of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The Russians will take the hand we offer.